Court in the Market: The 'Business' of a Princely Court in the Burgundian Netherlands, 1467-1503

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the relations between court and commerce in Europe at the onset of the modern era. Focusing on one of the most powerful princely courts of the period, the court of Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, which ruled over one of the most advanced economic regions in Europe, the greater Low Countries, it argues that the Burgundian court was, both in its institutional operations and its cultural aspirations, a commercial enterprise.

Based primarily on fiscal accounts, corroborated with court correspondence, municipal records, official chronicles, and contemporary literary sources, this dissertation argues that the court was fully engaged in the commercial economy and furthermore that the culture of the court, in enacting the ideals of a largely imaginary feudal past, was also presenting the ideals of a commercial future. It uncovers courtiers who, despite their low rank yet because of their market expertise, were close to the duke and in charge of acquiring and maintaining the material goods that made possible the pageants and ceremonies so central to the self-representation of the Burgundian court. It exposes the wider network of court officials, urban merchants and artisans who, tied by marriage and business relationships, together produced and managed the ducal liveries, jewelries, tapestries and finances that realized the splendor of the court. It shows how the princely court adapted to and harnessed the commercial economy

of the urban network, employing nominally feudal titles and structures. Furthermore, it reveals how courtly understandings of magnificence and honor were also demonstrations of commercial prowess and acknowledgements of commercial wealth, even as these discourses were framed in terms of chivalric ideals. The princely court was neither merely a predatory expropriator of urban wealth nor a rapacious consumer of luxury goods, but also an active participant in the commercial economy.

By examining the 'business' of a princely court, this dissertation seeks to contribute to our understanding of the socio-cultural manifestations of state and market formation during the late medieval and early modern era. This study is one testimony of how Europeans sought to make sense of, and more importantly, to channel and control the tides of commercialization, utilizing the institutional and cultural frameworks they inherited from their past. The intertwined relationship between the princely court and the commercial economy in the Burgundian Netherlands draws our attention to the common processes, institutions and cultures that laid the groundwork for the modern state and the capitalist economy.

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Introduction

The Burgundian Netherlands at the Crux of State and Market Formation in Early Modern Europe

I.

Opening dossier number 2087 of series B deposited in the regional archives at Lille in France is like pulling a cashier's drawer of the Burgundian court in the year of 1471.[1] It is filled with bundles of unorganized receipts, recorded on paper and parchment, many folded and a few torn at the edges. The large and small payments, ranging from over a thousand Flemish pounds to twelve shillings provide a snapshot of the endless transactions of money for goods and services that the court was enmeshed in.[2] The name of the recipients range from high profile dignitaries such as Arnold, Duke of Guelders, to lower level members of the court, such as Philibert Le Verre, a squire.[3] Yet, beyond this unsurprising list of nobles and courtiers, there is a multitude of men who would be deemed to exist outside the court,

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[1] Archives départementales de Nord, série B. Chambre des Comptes (Henceforth, AD Nord B.) nr. 2087.

[2] The livres of 40 Flemish *gros* was the basic accounting unit in the Burgundian Netherlands, with the standard division of l *livres* (pounds) = 20 *sols* (shillings) = 240 *deniers* (pence). Unless indicated otherwise, this is the unit used in this work.

[3] The House of Egmont, who held the duchy of Guelders, had a checkered history with the House of Burgundy. But Arnold was an ally of Charles the Bold, for it was only after the latter had been imprisoned by the former's father, Adolf, that Arnold succeeded to the duchy. For a detailed description of the duchy, see A Gerard Nijsten, *In the Shadow of Burgundy: The Court of Guelders in the Late Middle Ages*, trans. Tanis Guest (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

such as Jean Nyvart, a merchant of draperies, or Jean Marchant, an embroiderer from Brussels.[4] These local merchants and artisans appear as recipients of payments for a wide variety of goods, from textiles to silverware to armor, and their transactions provide the bulk of recipients in this dossier. The court's cashier was just as busy doing business with merchants and artisans of the market as rewarding nobles and courtiers of the court.

It is not just the sheer volume and number of people involved that merits attention. Examining the names of those who were paid for providing goods and services and those who were overseeing and paying them reveals a dizzying array of courtiers, officers, merchants and artisans.[5] In many cases, a seemingly low-level officer of the court, usually one without a hereditary title or noble status, presided over or mediated the transactions. Meanwhile, some of the artisans and merchants who provisioned the court were also – simultaneously it seems – valets or servants of the ducal court and household. Sifting through the records, it is often difficult to draw the lines between those who were of the court and outside the market, and those who were of the market and outside the court. The collection of receipts, in short, is a testimony to the messy and intricate web of relations which governed the mundane yet incessant interaction of the court and the market.

To the modern eye, these records and such relations may merely confirm the inferior level of development that we expect of a pre-modern state and a pre-modern

[4] For a full discussion of Jean Nyvart and Jean Marchant, see chapters 2 and 3.

[5] Each receipt typically name the monetary amount and the recipient up front, and then name the official in charge of authorizing or paying the amount at the end, with a repeat of the said sum. For a detailed example of such transactions, see chapter 2.

economy.[6] The messy web of relations and transactions appears to confirm that the court was a haphazard and disorganized participant in the market, while the overlapping names and functions highlight the lack of separation between different spheres of activity. Having not yet quite stepped into the modern era, the Burgundian court's dealings with the market seem a showcase of how the state and the economy were both in their embryonic stages, not yet the distinct realms of actions, with separate logics, that they were to become. Such records seem to testify to their "underdevelopment" or "immaturity," with its implication of cronyism and inefficiency.

However, such developmental assessments rather reveal our preconceptions about state and market formation than express an understanding of the logic behind their interaction in the pre-modern era. The princely court was only one of the various medieval entities that would later metamorphose into the modern state. At the same time, however, it had no such intention. Princes were interested in perpetuating their dynasties, not in building a "state" or establishing "correct" relations with the market.[7] Market exchange was increasingly permeating many sectors of life, but – in an era before economics, as a discipline and a discourse, provided a separate framework and language to express and legitimize them – non-market modes of exchange in the form of tribute and gifts were at

[6] A standard account of seeing the lack of separation between state and capital as symptoms of corruption and underdevelopment is M. Robinson, "Corruption and Development: An Introduction," in *Corruption and Development,* ed. M. Robinson, (London, 1998). For an example of such attitudes projected backward into history, note the causal manner in which Francis Fukuyama equates early modern France and the former Soviet Union in his "Social Capital, Civil Society and Development," *Third World Quarterly* 22 (2001), 18.

[7] Wim Blockmans, *A History of Power in Europe: Peoples, Markets, States* (Antwerp, 1997), 105-56; Richard Bonney, *The European Dynastic States, 1494-1660* (Oxford, 1991), 524-31.

least as important. Furthermore, market transactions rarely if ever conformed to the modern ideal where buyers and sellers bargain at "arms-length."[8]

This long-term historical perspective prods us to reconsider the intertwined nature of the court and the market, so clearly visible in the Burgundian records. Rendering such interdependence between the court and the market as a conflation or an underdevelopment falsely projects the image of the modern state and market, as distinct and separate spheres, each with their own logic and processes, backwards in time. Reducing the history of the court-market relations in the late medieval and early modern Low Countries to a four-hundred-year precursor of those later forms would prevent us from seeing the multitude of intersections and richness of interactions that comprised contemporary entities and relations. Thus, it is precisely the contemporary practices and logic governing such court-market relations at the onset of the early modern period that need to be explained.

This dissertation seeks to recast our understanding of this relationship between the princely court and the market economy during the late medieval and early modern era by examining the court of the Burgundian dukes during the final quarter of the fifteenth century. It excavates not only how the court was fully embedded in the commercial economy of the era but also how it enacted the market's power. It shows how a seemingly feudal institution could incorporate commercial practices, and how a seemingly decadent chivalric culture could also celebrate market values. In doing so, it argues that the western market economy was imbricated in a political culture that is often seen as – and presented itself as – its opposite. It emphasizes how socio-cultural frameworks, which to our eyes

[8] Martha Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism in Europe, 1300-1800* (Cambridge, 2010), 1-48.

seem foreign and inhospitable to a modern state and market economy, could mediate the interlocked processes of state and market formation. The princely court of the Burgundian dukes provides us with a lens to examine how Europeans of the late fifteenth century struggled to make sense of, and more importantly, to channel and control, the changes wrought by the commercialization of society using the cultural and institutional frameworks they inherited from their past.

Understanding this intertwined relationship between the court and the market is crucial to gaining insight into the broader questions about how the modern state and capitalism came about. Although the court and the market cannot be best conceived of as the 'seed' from which the modern state and capitalism were respectively destined to 'sprout,' their relationship undeniably set the stage for, and made possible, the subsequent success of the two. The success of the princely court in competing for control over expanding but still limited resources, and in harnessing the inherited legacies and incorporating innovative techniques at hand was to a large degree made possible by its awareness and embrace of the nascent capitalist economy.[9] Likewise, the transition to a modern capitalist economy was facilitated at each phase by the active hand of the state.[10] Furthermore, the recent debate on the question of the "Great Divergence" in the early modern era has focused attention on how non-European societies lacked "a European kind of desire for expansion based on the wedding of profit and power," despite the underlying

[9] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European State, A.D. 990-1992* (Oxford, 1990); Charles Tilly and Wim Blockmans, *Cities and the Rise of States in Europe, A.D.1000 to 1800* (Boulder, 1994).

[10] S. R. Epstein, *Freedom and Growth: The Rise of States and Markets in Europe, 1300-1750* (Cambridge, 2000); Ha-Joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective* (London, 2002).

similarities in economic growth. It is the mercantile nature of the European states that contrast vividly with the agrarian empire of the East.[11] Conversely, the rise of China and the resurgence of Russia have resurrected concepts such as "state-capitalism" or "authoritarian capitalism," while the latest intervention of Western governments in the financial sectors of their economy has once again poignantly reminded us how the history of capitalism is fraught with the history of the modern state.[12]

At the end of the medieval and beginning of the early modern era, the spectacular success and fall of the Burgundian Netherlands under the Valois and Hapsburg dukes presents one of the most vivid testimonies of the intertwined process of state and market formation.[13] It provides an early model of how European societies undertook the dual

[11] R. Bin Wong, "The Search for European Differences and Domination in the Early Modern World: A view from Asia," *American Historical Review* 107 (2002), 447- 69.

[12] Robert Reich, "The Real Competition behind the Olympics," *The Economist* (Aug 05, 2008); "The Rise of state Capitalism: Coming to Grips with Sovereign-Wealth Funds," *The Economist* (Sep 18, 2008); Ian Bremmer, "State Capitalism Comes of Age," *Foreign Affairs* 88 (2009), 40-55. Historians, of course, have been acutely aware that the history of capitalism is fraught with the history of the modern state, even as they debated the exact nature of that relationship. Specifically, financial historians have shown how the modern financial market which caused so much havoc was in its inception intertwined with the problem of financing the heavy cost of wars epidemic to nascent modern states, while economic historians of early modern Europe have debated the merits and faults of "mercantilism." For a casual overview, see Niall Ferguson, *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World* (New York, 2008).

[13] Here, I would like to clarify the terms used in this inquiry. First, I use the term "state formation," rather than terms such as "state-building" or "rise of the modern state" because the latter two connote degree of intentionality or a given teleology that the former does not. Though it cannot be denied that what we now call "the state" was the end result of a long term evolution of the political power apparatus in the West, in the early modern era such a state was not a conscious model that existed as an ideal to be realized. Some historians, following Weber, do consider the conscious effort to build institutions and organs of power that were distinct and detached from the person of the ruler, i.e., a bureaucracy as an aspect of "state-building," but for much of the early modern period, I consider this more a product of elites seeking to erect separate means of power rather than a project seeking to build a "state." Second, I use the term "market formation" rather than "economic development" or "capitalism" to emphasize the creation of a modern economy in which the market mechanisms, following Polanyi, are gradually untethered from and gain predominance over social, cultural and political constraints. I posit that this process can happen without necessarily being accompanied by

processes of commercialization of society and the reorganization of power during the long transition to modern nation-state and capitalism. If we understand that relationship better, it can provide further insight into the nature of subsequent state-market relations such as the Spanish and Portuguese in the New and Old World, the Dutch and English East India Companies, and the French monarchs and their financiers.[14] The purpose of this dissertation is to uncover and understand the intersection of the court and the market in the Burgundian Netherlands, and thereby shed light on how to understand and approach this ongoing historical relationship of the state and the market. We start by considering the broader historiographic narratives that frame our understanding of state and market formation.

"economic development" or growth, and is distinct from "capitalism" which, following Braudel, I find more useful to consider as a specific sector of economic activities that yields the highest profits, often by manipulating normal market mechanisms (i.e., "mercantile capitalism" "industrial capitalism" "finance capitalism").

[14] The literature on these subjects is vast, though the question has often been framed in different ways. The seminal work that draws attention to the incorporation of state power and rational use of force in conducting trade (by comparing the Portuguese *Estado da India* and the Dutch VOC) is Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (Chicago, 1973); Jou, Kyung-Chul. "Globalization "avant la lettre"?: The Dutch East India Company on Asian Waters." *Entreprises et histoire* 32 (2003): 59-71; *Merchants, Companies, and Trade: Europe and Asia in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Sushil Chaudhury and Michel Morineau (Cambridge, 1999). For the Atlantic Empires, J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven, 2006) provides an informative perspective. For an introduction to state-market cooperation in long-distance overseas trade see *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World,* ed. James Tracy (New York, 1990). Philip Stern's recent work *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and The Early Modern Origins of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, 2011) also emphasizes the state building dimension of early modern long distance trade. On French financiers, Philippe Hamon, *"Messieurs des finances": les grands officiers de finance dans la France de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1999) and Daniel Dessert, *Argent, pouvoir et société au Grand Siècle* (Paris, 1984) provide useful overviews.

II.

The historiographic narratives of 'state-formation' and 'market-formation' have centered around three broad trends. The traditional one, which still holds much sway, derives from the classical whiggish narrative that only a certain kind of modern state can bring about a fully functioning modern economy.[15] In this rather triumphalist story, it is the struggle for political and economic liberty that defines progress towards a modern state and economy. From the late medieval and early modern era, the mercantile class clamors first for protection (negative liberty) from feudal forces and then for freedom (positive liberty) from the absolutist state. In the course of this struggle, the state is transformed from a rent-seeking apparatus to an administration that ensures and facilitates the central institutions of a market economy, such as securing property rights, enforcing contracts, and providing stable monetary units.

This narrative has been further nuanced and made more sophisticated by the works of Douglass North and New Institutional Economics school.[16] They argue that the decline of transaction costs made possible by securing property rights (institutional change) was

[15] For instance, C. North and Robert Paul Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World: A New Economic History* (Cambridge, 1973); E. L. Jones, *The European Miracle: Environments, Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia* (Cambridge, 1981); John A. Hall, *Powers and Liberties: The Causes and Consequences of the Rise of the West* (Oxford, 1985); *Europe and the Rise of Capitalism*, ed. J. Baechelr, J. A. Hall and M. A. Mann (Oxford, 1988), especially the "Introduction." David S. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Others So Poor* (New York, 1998) also follow these lines. A famous rendition of this thesis is Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York, 1992), equating liberal democracy and market economy.

[16] Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge, 1990); The models in the latter were further developed in a series of articles in *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* / *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* and *Journal of Economic History*.

the precondition for formal markets, and that it is the constitutional state which is most responsive to these needs and becomes most responsible for their enforcement.[17] Yet this implies that the competent "constitutional" state always existed, at least in potential, as some sort of ideal to be realized. In fact, however, the 'state' in the early modern era was fragmented, and more importantly made up of a multitude of overlapping and competing entities that had jurisdiction and influence over economic matters. North and his followers project the modern state onto a pre-modern economy, without questioning the fact that the state also was in the process of being constituted.

More recently, Avner Greif has revised and updated this school of thought by adducing models from game theory and comparing medieval Mediterranean merchant networks.[18] Naming his method as 'Historical and Comparative Institutional History,' he acknowledges that the "common assertion … that market expansion and economic development require an effective state is not confirmed by the experiences" of "late medieval commercial expansion."[19] Rather, it was "individualism and corporations" evidenced in the large-scale, non-kin-based, self-governing towns that explain the remarkable economic expansion of late medieval Europe.[20] He further suggests that,

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[17] North and Thomas, *Rise*, 146-56; Douglass, *Institutions*, 54-71. Barry R. Weingast, "Constitutions as Governance Structures: The Political Foundations of Secure Markets," *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 149 (1993): 286–311; North and Weingast, "Constitutions and commitment: evolution of institutions governing public choice in seventeenth –century England," *Journal of Economic History* 49 (1989):803-32.

[18] Avner Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade. Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions* (Cambridge, 2006).

[19] Greif, *Institutions*, 388.

[20] In non-European societies, such as the Maghribi traders network, kin-based social structures such as clans and tribes ensured the trust and enforcement necessary for economic expansion. Grief further develops this thesis in comparisons with pre-modern China in Avner Greif and Guido Tabellini,

though modern economic growth differed from medieval commercial expansion, the successful constitutional state that best provided for that growth grew out of these institutions and shared their distinct characteristics of "individualism" and "corporation."[21] It leads to an argument that, on the one hand, emphasizes the historically contingent nature of institutions that adapted to given challenges and supported further economic development, but on the other hand returns to a traditional argument that reasserts the peculiar traits of European civilization.

A second school of thought suggests that state-formation is a by-product of market-formation. Following the thoughts first put forward by Marx, this tradition has taken two slightly different and sometimes conflicting routes.[22] The first route emphasizes structural changes in the material base, and seeks to identify the main factors in this change. These concerns were evident in the earlier Dobb-Sweezy debate, which centered on whether the impetus of the transition was endogenous or exogenous to feudalism, leaving the question of the state as almost an afterthought.[23] Whether it was the diminishing returns of feudal agricultural production or the revival of long distance trade, the result was that modern

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"Cultural and Institutional Bifurcation: China and Europe Compared," *The American Economic Review* 100 (2010), 135-140.

[21] Greif, *Institutions*,391-400. The underlying common thread between the two characteristics is the centrality of non-kin based identities and organizations, which, in essence, is a return to the central characteristics of European society emphasized by Max Weber.

[22] Karl Marx's understanding of the state and the market was more nuanced than the oft quoted "The executive of the modern state is nothing, but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." For a review of Marx and Engels' changing understanding, see chapter 1 of *Capitalism, State Formation and Marxist Theory: Historical Investigations*, ed. Philip Corrigan (London, 1980); Ibid, chapter 2 summarizes the various writings by Marxist scholars on the early modern English state, and tellingly emphasizes how the state was not only a reflection of the substructure, but an active agent in fostering capitalism.

[23] *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism,* ed. Paul Sweezy (London, 1978).

state was inevitably born out of a crisis in the economic sphere that destabilized previous social relations. Yet, in this narrative, the process of state-formation was one that would take several centuries, in which various feudal entities were gradually consolidated first into territorial kingdoms and later into modern nation-states.

To better explain this long transition to a modern state, Perry Anderson posited the absolutist kingdoms as fundamentally an extension of the feudal structure, "a redeployed and recharged apparatus of feudal domination," albeit acknowledging that it was a compromise between the monarchy and the nobility.[24] In doing so, he underscored the relatively underdeveloped nature of capitalism in this transitional period, but conversely conferred more agency on the nobility and autonomy in the political sphere. In this formulation, the central question of the transition from feudalism to capitalism is the changing nature of the state, despite the continuities in the ruling class and economic base. Yet in stressing the material base of market and state formation, it ended with a roundabout emphasis on the state.

This tendency to return to the state is more evident in the second route that focuses on the class struggles as the agent of change. Although the scholars following this route consider class struggle a product of structural changes in the economy, the overall emphasis on the exact manifestations and different outcome of those struggles reintroduced the role of the state. This was highlighted in the subsequent debate among Marxist historians of late medieval and early modern Europe, the so-called Brenner debate.[25]

[24] Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London, 1974), 18.

[25] *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe,* ed. T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin (Cambridge, 1985).

Brenner argued that different historical development of property rights over land explained the decline of serfdom and the rise of agrarian capitalism in England, in contrast to France where the ruling class had different interests and powers.[26] By denying that demographic or even commercial trends were the crucial factors, and emphasizing that the context and outcome of class struggle were the determining factors in the transition to capitalism, Brenner backhandedly brought back the state as the locus of different outcomes, without actually explaining the nature of the state at this juncture of history.

Building on Brenner and Anderson, Ellen Meiksins Wood presents a view in which capitalist development determines the relative strength and weakness of the modern state.[27] In her recasting of early modern history, Wood unequivocally claimed that capitalism developed early and forcefully in England, which undermined the development of a strong state apparatus, while it was the relative lag of capitalist development on the continent that explains the relative strength of the modern state in France and elsewhere. Focusing on the seventeenth century, she underscores the importance of the English domestic market, its productivity and its mass demand (rather than foreign trade supported by military supremacy), as the crux of the early modern "commercial system." Yet in examining the cause, she inadvertently returns to an explanation that "the coercive power of the propertied class and its *state* sustained the concentration of property and the class relations which created both England's exceptional productivity and its mass market."[28] How this

[26] Brenner, "Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe," *Past and Present* 70 (1976): 30-75.

[27] Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism: A Historical Essay on Old Regimes and Modern States* (London, 1991).

[28] Woods, *Pristine Culture,* 99 (emphasis added).

early modern state emerged still remains to be answered, and prods us to consider the intertwined nature of state and market formation.

A third narrative sees state and market formation as contemporaneous and interrelated historical process. As Braudel noted in his masterly synthesis of the early modern economy and society, *Capitalism and Civilization*, "it was within the context of the market economy that a *certain* capitalism and a *certain* version of the modern state first appeared."[29] For Braudel, with his broad comparative perspective building on a wide range of historical scholarship on early modern societies, the state and capitalism both rose up from a market economy that was a constant in settled societies across eras and localities. [30] Focusing on developments that he thought were peculiar to Western Europe during the early modern era, Braudel tried to delineate the trajectory towards the modern state and capitalism. He argued that in the early modern era, capitalism was a separate realm of calculation and manipulation that generated high rates of capital accumulation by sitting at the apex of the market economy and the material life below it – a position that the state could also occupy.[31] So, to Braudel, capitalism and the state were in competition for extraction of the same profits, but they were most successful when they were in cooperation, as in the case of the monopoly companies such as the Dutch East India Company. In this sense, the key is explaining how the peculiar and symbiotic relation between the state and capitalism arose in early modern Europe.

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[29] Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism:15th-18th Century*, vol. 2, *The Wheels of Commerce* (New York, 1982), 519.

[30] Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism:15th-18th Century*, vol. 3, *Perspective of the World* (New York, 1984).

[31] Braudel, *Wheels*, 374-77, 455-57, 519.

Charles Tilly sought to answer this question by paying attention to the multiple paths of state formation within Europe, and identifying "capital" and "coercion" as the two crucial means of mobilizing resources necessary to successfully wage war and build a modern nation-state.[32] Tilly compares the spectrum of states, from those that drew surplus from "the commercialization of the economy" such as the Dutch Republic, to those the relied primarily on the "the creation of a military machine" such as Russia, and posits that states that could combine the two – the "capitalized-coercion" states such as England and France – were the most successful.[33] Tilly makes the link between state and market formation concrete by showing how cities, as concentrations of capital, provided the credit necessary to finance wars, but if the relative bargaining power of the mercantile class became too strong, it would hinder the build-up of a national army and bureaucracy necessary for the ever escalating demands of war. Tilly's historical sociology emphasizes the mutually empowering process of state and market formation, and inadvertently draws attention to the importance of governing institutions that were beholden to neither oligarchic urban elites nor entrenched local elites, such as the princely court. Yet compared to his nuanced understanding of how the state apparatus would build up over time, he glosses over the changing degree and paths of commercialization within Europe.

The works of S. R. Epstein cover this lacuna by carefully appraising the historical role of the state in the varying stages of economic development. He shows that gradual judicial integration and political centralization conducted by the state was required to

[32] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990* (Cambridge, 1990).

[33] Tilly, *Coercion, Capital*, 33-36, 91-94.

ensure market integration and coordination, which fostered economic efficiency and growth.[34] Using these criteria, he carefully assesses how different regimes played different roles at different stages of economic development, or why "economically optimal power structures change over time."[35] Specifically, in the era following the Black Death, Epstein argues that the role of princes was crucial in overcoming political fragmentation and consolidating institutional boundaries to overlap with economic boundaries.[36] In the pivotal period from 1450 to 1500, territorial states and national monarchies, on the one hand, adopted the technologies of power developed by city-states, while on the other hand, weakened the centrifugal tendencies of urban elites.[37] To a degree, Epstein's adherence to uncovering the factors behind "economic efficiency" makes his historical narrative fall back on a developmental scheme which obscures the logic of past behavior. Still, it provides a more nuanced view on the correlation of state- and market-formation, and focuses our attention on the institutional arrangements that drew from both urban and monarchical traditions.

These historiographical frameworks, despite their diverging agendas and perspectives, converge in underscoring the approaches necessary in studying the relation

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[34] S. R. Epstein, *Freedom and Growth: The Rise of States and Markets in Europe, 1300-1750* (Cambridge, 2000). Despite the title of the book, Epstein is pushing back against the prevalent view that it was the guarantee of "individual freedom" by states that was fundamental to economic development, and rather advocates the role of the state in facilitating economic cooperation and ensuring competitive markets.

[35] S. R. Epstein, "The Rise of the West," in *An Anatomy of Power: The Social Theory of Michael Mann*, ed. John A. Hall and Ralph Schroeder (Cambridge, 2006), 233–62.

[36] Epstein, *Freedom and Growth*, 147-67.

[37] Epstein, *Freedom and Growth*, 49-72. Epstein considers the late medieval crisis and the crisis of the long seventeenth-century as pivotal moments in the rise of the West.

between state and market formation in the early modern era. Above all, they raise the fundamental issue of how to frame and understand the contemporaneous and correlated processes of state and market formation. The work of previous historians brings into relief how basic concepts such as "state," "market," and "capital" are inherently anachronistic in the sense that they are still defined in nineteenth-century terms which reflect the moment when their modern forms were crystallized. This inherent anachronism requires us to refrain from searching for medieval 'constraints' that explain their lack of conformity with modern notions or early modern 'impetuses' that presage their evolution into their modern forms, even as we benefit by knowing their future.

More particularly, this body of literature compels us to consider the question of state and market formation in concrete historical *institutions* that embodied that relationship. To do so we need to rid ourselves of the tendency to treat institutions as kernels of later bodies or as the correct rules-of-the-game that needed to be implemented and instead focus on the labile and mutable nature of state-market relations and the ways in which institutions inherited from the past could adapt, enhance and obstruct that relationship. It was the changing roles of old institutional setups as well as the establishment of new institutions that decided the various outcomes of state and market formation. At the same time, these studies direct our attention to the particular historical *contexts* that conditioned and channeled the role of those institutions. As the historians above emphasize, the same institution, such as a guild or a city-state, could be conducive to economic growth at one point while being detrimental at a later point. Likewise, the interplay between political and economic forces in those institutions was mediated through

socio-cultural frameworks that were particular to each society. In short, we can only discern the gradual, varied and unintended course of state and market formation by looking at specific historical institutions in their own contemporary context, and by seeking to understand how the contemporaries living through them sought to channel and control that interaction.

III.

The Burgundian Netherlands at the turn of the fifteenth century provide a fertile ground to examine these questions of state and market formation.[38] The peculiar status of the Burgundian Netherlands in late medieval and early modern Europe, combining as it did one of the most advanced economies, the Flemish-Brabantine urban networks, with an overarching and formidable political entity, the French Valois dukes, provides a compelling case study of interaction between the court and the commercial economy. At the cusp of the early modern era, the court of Burgundian dukes was northwestern Europe's most renowned and powerful court, and became a model to be emulated by contemporary and later princely courts.[39] The great urban centers such as Ghent, Lille and

[38] The standard narratives of the Burgundian Netherlands are Walter Prevenier and Wim Blockmans, *The Promised Lands: The Low Countries under Burgundian Rule, 1369-1530* (Philadelphia, 1999) and their earlier work, *The Burgundian Netherlands* (Cambridge, 1986). The latter is structured thematically and provides rich details and illustrations, while the former is chronologically ordered and focuses on the historical development of the region. C. A. J. Armstrong, *England, France, and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1983) also provide an introduction to the major historiographical issues.

[39] Werner Paravicini, "The Court of the Dukes of Burgundy: A Model for Europe?" in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age*, ed. R. G. Asch and A. M. Birke (Oxford, 1991). Paravicini does caution that it is difficult to separate what was specifically

Brussels were industrial powerhouses with a wide range of production in textiles and luxuries, while cosmopolitan cities such as Bruges and later Antwerp were trading posts connecting Italian merchants from the Mediterranean to the Hanse merchants from the Baltic.[40] In addition, the fact that the Burgundian Netherlands is not the direct kernel of a present nation-state allows us to resist reducing it to a precursor of something to be, and consider it in its own light.[41]

The princely court of the Burgundian dukes provides a focal point for what then constituted the state and how it related to the contemporary commercialized economy at the onset of the early modern era.[42] The veritable 'middle kingdom' that fell under the suzerainty of the dukes of Burgundy had been accumulated over three generations, and it

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"Burgundian" in later court rituals and ceremonies, as much of it was part of a shared court culture in Europe, but he also shows that rituals and structures introduced to later court were often called as "Burgundian," testifying to its enduring influence and fame. For a more detailed treatment see the conference papers compiled in *La cour de Bourgogne et l'Europe: Le rayonnement et les limites d'un modèle culturel*, ed. Werner Paravicini, Torsten Hiltmann and Frank Viltart (Ostfildern, 2013); *Splendour of the Burgundian Court: Charles the Bold* (1433-1477), ed. Susan Marti, Till-Holger Borchert and Gabriele Keck (Brussels, 2009) provides vivid illustrations of the surviving splendor of the Burgundian court.

[40] James M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism, 1280-1390* (Cambridge, 2005); David Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders* (London, 1992); Nicholas, *Urban Europe, 1100-1700* (Basingstoke, 2003); Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market and the European Economy (14th - 16th centuries)* (The Hague, 1963); Peter Stabel, *Dwarfs Among Giants: The Flemish Urban Network in the Late Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1997); *International Trade in the Low Countries (14th-16th Centuries): Merchants, Organisation, Infrastructure*, ed. Peter Stabel and Anne Greve (Leuven, 2000).

[41] Henri Pirenne in his *Histoire de Belgique des origines à nos jours* (Bruxelles, 1948), sought to place the origin of Belgium in the Burgundian Netherlands, but not many historians have followed suit. The Flemish researchers have been more concerned with the history of the respective cities of the Low Countries, while much of the study of Valois Burgundy has fallen to French or English scholars.

[42] Wim Blockmans, "Voracious States and Obstructing Cities: An Aspect of State Formation in Preindustrial Europe" *Theory and Society* 18 (1989): 733-755, "The Impact of Cities on State Formation: Three Contrasting Territories in the Low Countries," in *Resistance, Representation, and Community*, ed. Peter Blickle (Oxford, 1997), 256-71.

was an unwieldy patchwork of disparate duchies, counties, lordships and cities.[43] As with many "composite" states of the early modern era, it was the person of the ruler who held separate titles for each of his holdings that tied them together.[44] The ruler's strong vertical relationship with his subjects contrasted with the weak horizontal relationship between the various territories, while economic activities and trade networks created different patterns of connections between those territories. Thus, it was the princely court of the Burgundian dukes that provided a major arena for the interaction between the various social groups within his realm.[45] Moreover, as I will argue in this dissertation, the itinerant nature of the court, combined with the multiple ducal households that were maintained in the major cities, equipped the princely court with an apparatus to manage those relationship.[46]

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[43] Bertrand Schnerb, *L'Etat bourguignon, 1363-1477* (Paris, 1999) ; Richard Vaughan, *Valois Burgundy* (Hamden, 1975). On the ducal court itself, *A la cour de Bourgogne: Le Duc, son entourage, son train*, ed. Jean-Marie Cauchies (Turnhout. 1998), especially Werner Paravicini's "Structure et fonctionnement de la cour bourguignonne au xve siècle," provides a useful overview.

[44] A typical ordinance of Charles from 1467 starts: "Charles, by the grace of God, Duke of Burgundy, of Lotharingia, of Limburg, and of Luxembourg, Count of Flanders, of Artois, of Burgundy-Palatinate, of Hainault, of Holland, of Zeeland, and of Namur, Marquis of the Empire, Lord of Frise, of Salins and of Mechelen." This presents a total of 15 titles, and during his reign he would acquire further titles such as the duke of Lorraine, duke of Guelders, as well as lordship of the Somme towns. Furthermore, the dukes of Burgundy usually had separate arrangements with major cities according to the charters that had been issued. Historical sociologists such as Michael Mann, in his *The Sources of Social Power,* vol.1, *A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760* (Cambridge, 2012), 438-40, considers this a reason for the failure of the Burgundian state, but as historians have emphasized, such 'composite kingdoms' were the general condition of most European states in the late medieval and early modern era. On the nature of 'composite kingdoms' see, J. H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past and Present* 137 (1992): 48-71, and H.G. Koenigsberger, "Monarchies and Parliaments in Early Modern Europe: *Dominium regale* or *dominium politicum et regale*" ed. H.G. Koenigsberger, *Politicians and Virtuosi: Essays in Early Modern History* (London 1986), 1-25.

[45] Jan Dumolyn, "Les conseillers flamands au XV^{e} siècle: rentiers du pouvoir, courtiers du pouvoir "in *Powerbrokers in the Late Middle Ages. The Burgundian Low Countries in a European context* (Turnhout 2001) 67-8; Mario Damen, "The Nerve Center of Political Networks?: The Burgundian Court and the Integration of Holland and Zeeland into the Burgundian State, 1425-1477," in *The Court as a Stage: England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages,* ed. Steven Gunn and Antheun Janse (Woodbridge, 2006).

[46] See chapter 3.

Furthermore, the traditional characterization of the Burgundian court as the final, fateful blossoming of medieval culture demands that we attentively examine how contemporaries understood the interaction between the court and the market and how they undertook those interactions.[47] Johan Huizinga memorably depicted the late medieval court of the Burgundian dukes as the apotheosis of a dying feudal culture, in which chivalric ideals were constantly performed through rituals and ceremonies. Although he was aware of the financial sophistication of the Burgundian adminstration, Huizinga emphasized that their worldview was seemingly miles apart from the burgeoning commercial life in the towns and cities under ducal suzerainty, described by Henri Pirenne as the forefront of the transition to a modern economy and society. [48]

Historians have since produced rich studies showing how the seemingly frivolous rituals worked to construct power, how courtly splendor was financed by commercial wealth drawn in large part from the vibrant cities of the greater Low Countries, and how the two different realms of the court and urban society regularly intersected.[49] Yet, even as

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[47] Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); see also Huzinga, "Burgund. Eine Krise der romanisch-germanischen Verhaltnisses." in *Verzamelde werken,* vol. 2 (Haarlem, 1948) 238-65.

[48] Huizinga, *Autumn*, 9-10, depicts a scene quoted from the chronicles of Chastellain, in which the young Charles the Bold, having lost his pension from his father, survives through the mutual loving fidelity of his followers who all dedicate the pennies they have to him. Huizinga notes here that while the Burgundian finances were much advanced and this was probably not an exact description of how the young Charles managed without the pension from his father, for a noble like Chastellain, all events were painted and embellished in such chivalric and romantic tones.

[49] Marc Boone, *Gent en de Bourgondische hertogen, ca.1384 - ca. 1455. Een sociaal-politieke studie van een staatsvormingsproces* (Brussel, 1990); *Financiers et financiers des princes et des villes à l'epoque bourguignonne*. Burgundica VIII. Turnhout. 2004; Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, 1996); Andrew Brown and Graeme Small, "Introduction," *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries c.1420-1520* (Manchester, 2007).

they uncovered the interdependencies between court and commerce, historians have maintained the court as a distinct realm, inhabited by men with different skills and backgrounds, and informed by different cultural values and logics. Indeed, historians have argued that it was these antagonistic interchanges and the subsequent autonomy of each that gave us the modern state and the modern capitalist economy. I argue instead that the princely court of the Valois dukes and the cities and towns of the Low Countries were to a significant degree participants in the same process of commercialization. I do so, by focusing on the multitude of low level, often non-noble, officers as well as local merchants and artisans who were at once responsible for the bulk of everyday transactions and yet were legitimate members of court society.

The surviving records from the Burgundian Netherlands make such a research possible. As we witnessed in the records quoted at the beginning, the Valois dukes of Burgundy left a rich trove of court expenditures, fragmented but detailed, that make such a study possible.[50] The rare and valuable accounts of the ducal treasurer (*comptes d'argentier*) have been preserved almost in whole for the years 1468-71, while they survive in pieces for much of the rest of the 1470s.[51] Whereas most of the surviving financial records from late medieval and renaissance courts are about revenues, such as

[50] Werner Parvacini, "L'Embarras de richesse: Comment rendre accessibles les archives financières de la maison de Bourgogne-Valois," *Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques* 7 (1996), 21-68. Robert-Henri Bautier and Janine Sornay, *Les sources de l'histoire économique et social du Moyen Âge,* vol. 2*, Les états de la maison de Bourgogne* (Paris, 1984). See also the following section on the major sources utilized in this dissertation.

[51] *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire duc de Bourgogne*, 4 vols. ed. Anke Greve et Émilie Lebailly, sous la direction de Werner Paravicini, *Recueil des historiens de la France. Documents financiers et administratifs* (Paris, 2001-09).

taxes and aides, these accounts are remarkable for leaving us with details of where the increasing wealth of the court was spent, as well as the titles and statuses of the interested persons. Also, unpublished but directly related to these accounts, there are the receipts (*quittances*) that record who received how much and for what purpose. Unlike the accounts, they are not compiled in an orderly chronological fashion, but are rather bundled together in numerous boxes. There are also other fragmentary records, such as the daily register of payments left by the treasurer's clerk. Additional financial records survive from the ducal household. Some cover the accounts of the households of Charles the Bold, first as count of Charlelois and then as duke of Burgundy, and of the duchess, Margaret of York.[52] Because they are not complete, these household accounts provide only a glimpse of the daily provisioning of the court, and it is not possible to assess the whole volume. However, the intermittently surviving daily payrolls (*écroues*) provide an important source of information about the many lower level officers who were in charge of much of the interaction between the court and the merchants: when they first entered the court, their subsequent titles and rising pensions, and their colleagues, predecessors and successors.[53]

This dissertation combs these financial accounts, and corroborates them with the surviving court ordinances, ducal correspondence, official chronicles, municipal records and contemporary literary sources of the era, to trace the figures and the transactions that constituted the interaction of the court and the market in the Burgundian Netherlands at the

[52] The above are deposited in the *Algemeen Rijksarchief te Brussels, Rekenkamer, Grote Raad van Mechelen* dossiers and *Archives départementales de Nord, Lille série B. Chambre des Comptes* and *Hôtel du duc*. For a detailed list, see the bibliography.

[53] These are compiled and published in Holger Kruse, *Hof, Amt und Gagen. Die täglichen Gagenlisten des burgundischen Hofes (1430-1467) und der erste Hofstaat Karls des Kühnen (1456)* (Bonn, 1997).

turn of the fifteenth century.[54] My approach is empirical, for my object is to detail how these processes work and to discern how the individuals were engaged in them. By focusing on the myriad expenditures made by court officials and their agents, I illuminate the close relationship between the court and the local economy in an era where state and market were still fluid and not mutually exclusive categories. My study provides a richer, albeit fragmented, picture of the intricate and multi-layered personal roles and relationships that sustained that interaction – a picture that does not appear in most narratives about state finance. It sheds light on how a seemingly time-honored feudal organization actually concealed quite advanced commercial practices, and on who the courtiers and merchants-artisans managing these transactions were. Furthermore, by reconsidering the famed ceremonies of the Burgundian court in light of the practices and role of these figures, it recasts our understanding of this spectacular court culture.

IV.

The first chapter sets the stage by examining the court of Charles the Bold, the last Valois duke of Burgundy, with a focus on the economic role of the court. The advance of socio-

[54] These primary sources are relatively well documented and I will cite and introduce them in the chapters. Here I cite a few major relevant publications : "Liste chronologique des ordonnances de Charles le Hardi, Marie de Bourgogne, Maximilien d'Autriche et Philippe le Beau pour le comte de Hainaut (1467-1504)" ed. J.-M. Cauchies *Bulletin de la Commission royale pour la publication des anciennnes lois et ordonnances de Belgique* 31 (1982-1984 [1986]), 1-125; Henri Stein, *Catalogue des actes de Charles le Téméraire* 1467-77, ed. Sonja Dünnebeil (Sigmaringen, 1999); Jonas Braekevelt, "De verordeningen van Filips de Goede voor het graafschap Vlaanderen en de heerlijkheid Mechelen (1419–1438): Een voorlopige chronologische regestenlijst," *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Commissie voor de Uitgave der Oude Wetten en Verordeningen van België* 48 (2007): 9–86.

cultural research into early modern history has reignited interest in the princely court as the locus of political culture, as an arena of social relations, and as a consumer of material culture. The princely court is defined foremost as the entourage of the prince, with the ducal household as its structural backbone. This means that the visual presentation of the court, with the prince and his courtiers, was an essential aspect of statecraft, as much as the fiscal and administrative and judicial functions that were the prerogatives of the prince. The court ordinances promulgated by Duke Charles show that he sought to concentrate the executive role of managing the court in his private chamber, often by incorporating reforms and practices from other courts. New studies of the princely courts have also highlighted how they acted as a central clearing house of patronage networks and power relations between noble families, urban elites and foreign relations. The composite nature of the Burgundian realm, whose prince lacked a royal title, made the Burgundian court more vulnerable to such factional influences and divisions, but it also provided avenues for upward social mobility and demonstrated a remarkable openness to monetary exchange and mercantile expertise. Finally, the princely court of this age has received much reconsideration for its conspicuous consumption, and its cultural and economic impact. The Burgundian court was most renowned for such sumptuous extravagance, but focusing only consumption obscures its broader commercial character.

The second chapter seeks to rectify this omission by analyzing the fiscal records of court expenditures. It reveals that behind the extravagant festivities and everyday operation of the court were a group of courtiers who were not only versed in its rituals and ceremonies but also knowledgeable about market conditions, commercial transactions and

managing production. Figures such as Jehan le Tourneur, the first steward (*premier sommelier du corps de duc*) and Jean de Rochefay, the first stablemaster (*premier écuyer d'écuire*) were in charge of procuring raw materials from merchants and arranging their production by artisans, and thereby ensured their proper presentation in the famed court rituals and processions. Court correspondence and ordinances record their careers, mapping their route from city to court, displaying their expertise in commerce and finance, and documenting their rise through the ranks with titles such as quartermasters (*fourrier*), keepers (*garde*) and stewards (*sommelier*). Despite their origins outside the noble circles and their relatively low status within the court hierarchy, they were indispensable to the duke because the operations of the princely court were taking on the characteristics of a commercial enterprise.

The third chapter tracks how the commercial reach of the court extended to urban merchants and artisans who were given nominally feudal titles that appeared to place them in the court itself. One of the major merchants who supplied the court was, for example, Hacquinet de Langle. Designated as a "merchant following the court (*marchant suivant la cour*)," he was a member of a well-established merchant family in Ghent, which was a major center of textile production at the heart of the urban network of the Low Countries. Rather than literally following the itinerant court, he was stationed in the city of Ghent itself where he served as a conduit for ducal transactions in the city. Likewise, one of the main ducal painters, Pierre Coustain, was designated as a "servant of the ducal chamber (*valet du chambre du duc*)." Yet he worked out of his workshop in Bruges, the major emporium and main luxury market of Northwestern Europe. Similarly, Jehan Boschuijzen,

a deputy (aide) and later successor to the first steward, was a member of a woolens merchant house from Leiden. It shows that under the guise of feudal titles, the court operated a network of merchants and artisans established in major urban centers, keeping itself embedded in the commercial world. Together these chapters brings into relief how these court official and urban merchants and artisans were tied together by marriage and linked by regular social and economic transactions, and constituted a web of business relations that managed the commercial, fiscal and productive workings of the court.

The fourth chapter changes gear and reconsiders the descriptive, prescriptive and literary sources emanating from the court milieu. It argues that, even as the court clothed itself in the rituals of an imagined chivalric past, it simultaneously and sometimes self-consciously celebrated its commercial prowess. The Burgundian courtier and master of the ducal household, Olivier de la Marche, for example, unabashedly emphasized the material wealth and financial might of the court as he lovingly detailed the sumptuous marriage of Duke Charles the Bold to Margaret of York in his *Memoires*. Such performances were manifestations of princely magnificence – a virtue that, as Lannoy discussed in his treatise ostensibly written for the young duke (*L'Instruction d'une jeune prince*) was more material than martial, more financial than moral. This changing sense of princely magnificence was accompanied by a subtle recasting of the traditional narratives about honor, which reflected the realities of a commercial world. An analysis of a collection of bawdy tales shared at the Burgundian court (*Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles)* reveals the change. Even as the stories underscore the inherent insecurity of manly honor, especially in terms of sustaining control over the female body, they also create an honor system in which rich merchants are

placed at the level of the prince's highest courtiers, prosperous townsmen at the level of knights, and the small shopkeeper or laborer among the lower orders of traditional society. Furthermore, in some cases, money could even redeem lost honor.

The fifth chapter is an epilogue that examines the change over time dimension of the court as a commercial enterprise. After the dynastic crisis and civil wars of the 1480s, the Burgundian court was reconstituted in a diminished scale at the city of Mechelen. Though past the heydays of Burgundian splendor, and now nominally under the tutelage of the Habsburgs, the court of Mary of Burgundy and Margaret of York slowly regained the basic structure and prominence of the Burgundian court. Despite the change of guard and times of turmoil, many of the courtiers in charge of commercial operations would continue to serve the court or gain social mobility through their expertise and ties. Though the volume of transactions contracted, the distribution of trade also reflected the changing character of the urban network, especially the ascendance of Antwerp.

In sum, the dissertation shows how the world of the Burgundian court was at once an imaginary world of chivalry and a burgeoning world of commerce. The pageants and ceremonies that were so central to the self-representation of the court were made possible by the business-like operations of courtiers, merchants and artisans who procured, produced and managed the variety of necessary material goods. But the splendor of the court depended not only on being able to expropriate commercial wealth; it depended as crucially on being able to channel and create it. More than political power, these tasks required business know-how, and this commercial prowess was, in fact, the source of the political power that was expressed as the "theater state." Moreover, as a commercial

enterprise, the court also gradually absorbed and came to articulate the values of the market. These were manifest in the public presentations of the court that at once enacted the chivalric ideals of an imagined past, as it embodied the commercial virtues that commanded the future, and thereby projected and legitimized the rule of the Valois dukes over their urban and commercial terrain. The court was, in a fundamental sense, the market itself – or as much "of" the market as the merchants and artisans who managed its 'business'.

By recasting the Burgundian court as a commercial enterprise, both in its institutional operations and its cultural aspirations, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the study of how the modern state and the modern market came to be during the late medieval and early modern era, and how early modern Europeans struggled to make sense of, and more importantly, to channel and control, these interactions using the cultural and institutional frameworks they inherited from their past. In making visible how enmeshed the court and the market were, it leads us to consider the contemporaneous processes of state and market formation as an intertwined process. It is not my purpose to argue that the court can be treated as an embryonic form of the modern nation state or that the commercialized economy of the Low Countries can be understood simply as a primitive version of the capitalist economy. Rather, their mutual imbrication during the early modern period provided the grounds for the subsequent development of both. The intertwined relationship between the court and the commercial economy in the Burgundian Netherlands calls for an understanding of the modern state and the modern capitalist economy as deliberate, though unintended, results of precisely the same processes,

institutions, and cultures, rather than as the creations of different classes, different moralities, and different ambitions. The market and the state were partners in each other's creation.

Chapter 1.

Towards a New Understanding of the Burgundian Court:

A State, A Stage, An Enterprise

I.

The magnificence and extravagance of the courts of the Valois Dukes of Burgundy caught the imagination of their contemporaries and have subsequently long intrigued historians. In his time, Phillip the Good was called the "Grand Duke of the West," and when his son Charles the Bold met with Frederick III of the Holy Roman Empire, an Italian ambassador deemed his entourage "the most splendid and magnificent spectacle."[1] Likewise, in our time, historians marvel at how the court of Burgundy displayed "a magnificence unseen in Europe since the fall of the Hohenstaufen Empire."[2] Whether this was, as later historians argued, the last blooming of an essentially medieval culture of chivalry or the lost precursor to later princely courts can be debated.[3] But there is no doubt that the wealth and

[1] Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Bold* (London, 1962); *Charles the Bold* (London, 1973), 169. Unlike the title of "granduca" that Cosimio de Medici would receive from the Pope in 1569, the title "le grand duc" was not an official rank in the hierarchy of the French Kingdom or the Holy Roman Empire. It was George Chastellain who described Philip the Good as "le grand duc du Ponant" and also as "le grand duc et grand lyon" in his chronicles, but it was not used as an official title by the dukes. *Oeuvres de Georges Chastellain II*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels, 1864), 150. Later, in the writings of nineteenth-century historians, this formulation was slightly changed to "le grand duc d'occident" and it is the latter that remains with us today.

[2] C. A. J. Armstrong, "The Golden Age of Burgundy: Dukes that Outdid Kings" in *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage, and Royalty 1400-1800* (New York, 1977), 57.

[3] Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the* Middle Ages, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago, 1996). Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique,* vol. 2*, Du commencement du XIVe siècle à la*

affluence of the court depicted in chronicles, triptychs, portraits and manuscripts have generated lasting interest. One only needs to dwell upon the luscious attire of the courtiers rendered to life by the painters of the day, which elicit awe even today, to appreciate this opulence. The ability of the Burgundian "theater-state" to impress foreign princes and domestic subjects lay, foremost, in its visible wealth.[4]

Both contemporaries and historians since knew the source of these riches. The Dukes of Burgundy claimed suzerainty over one of the two most economically vibrant regions of late medieval and early modern Europe.[5] The Low Countries, which the dukes had progressively accumulated by marriage alliances and at times by sheer force, was a center of industry north of the Alps as well as the nexus of trade with England and the Hanseatic cities. The magnificence of the ducal courts was sustained by tapping into the affluence of the urban networks of Flanders, Brabant and Holland. It was no wonder that despite having its origins in the eastern borderlands of inland France, it was the lands on the North Sea coast that were deemed "the lands hither" and where the itinerant court usually resided. Though the title and rank of the dukes came from the duchy of Burgundy and their lineage as princes of royal blood, the power and prestige of the court came from

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mort de Charles le Téméraire, ed., rev. and corr. (Bruxelle, 1908). On the fundamental disagreement yet mutual respect between the two historians, see Marc Boone "'L'automne du Moyen Age:' Johan Huizinga and Henri Pirenne or 'plusieurs vérités pour la meme chose,'" in *Autour du XVe siècle. Journées d'étude en l'honneur d'Alberto Varvaro* (Genoa, 2008), 27-51.

[4] Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier, *The Promised Lands: the Low Countries under Burgundian Rule* (Philadelphia, 1999), 132-140.

[5] Prevenier and Blockmans, *The Burgundian Netherlands* (Antwerp, 1985), 70-130. For more details on the economic foundations, see B. J. P. van Bavel, *Manors and Markets: Economy and Society in the Low Countries*, 500-1600 (Oxford, 2010), 162-371 and John Munro, *Textiles, Towns, and Trade: Essays in the Economic History of Late-Medieval England and the Low Countries* (Hampshire, 1994).

its control over the commercial heartland of greater Low Countries. It was this combination of ducal power and urban wealth that made possible the "Promised Lands."[6]

This relationship between the ducal court and the urban market was, however, tortuous in its time, and the study of it has been fraught in ours. Traditionally, while historians of the Valois dukes of Burgundy have concentrated on the process of state formation and courtly culture, the historians of the cities of the Low Countries have focused on the cities as harbingers of democratic institutions and especially as forerunners of economic modernity.[7] The relationship between the duke and the cities itself has usually been analyzed as a conflict over power and privileges.[8] Accordingly, the economic relationship between the court and the market has centered on the importance of the aids

[6] Prevenier and Blockmans, *The Burgundian Netherlands,* 9; *The Promised Lands*, 141.

[7] Vaughan, *Valois Burgundy* (London, 1975); Malcolm Vale, *War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (London, 1981); Bertrand Schnerb, *L'état Bourguignon, 1363-1477* (Paris, 1999); Henri Dubois, *Charles le Téméraire* (Paris, 2004). Henri Pirenne, *Early Democracies in the Low Countries: Urban Society and Political Conflict in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, trans. J. V. Saunders (New York, 1971); *Medieval Cities* (Princeton, 1954); H. van der Wee, *The Rise and Decline of Urban Industries in Italy and in the Low Countries* (Leuven, 1988). Peter Stable, *Dwarf among Giants: The Flemish Uran Network in the Late Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1997). The original thesis seeking to locate the historical origins of the modern state of Belgium has moved onto an inquiry over the nature of state formation in the Burgundian Netherlands, while the interest of urban and economic historians have widened from an investigation of individual cities into the broader cultural manifestations of urban life as well as connections with the wider European economy.

[8] Jan Dhondt, *Estates or Powers: Essays in the Parliamentary History of the Southern Netherlands from the XIIth to the XVIIIth century* (Heule, 1977); Wim Blockmans, "Alternatives to Monarchial Centralization: The Great Tradition of Revolt in Flanders and Brabant," in *Republiken und Republikanismus im Europa der früben Neuzeit*, ed. H. G. Koenigsberger (Munich, 1988); Marc Boone, ""In den beginne was het word." De vroege groei van "Parlementen" in de middeleeuwse vorstendommen der Nederlanden," in *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 120:3 (2005); Marc Boone and Maarten Prak, "Rulers, patricians and burghers: the Great and Little Traditions of Urban Revolt in the Low Countries," in *A Miracle Mirrored: The Dutch Republic in the European Perspective* (Cambridge, 1995)

that came to the Duke from the cities, and how the payments were negotiated.[9] More recently, as cultural history has gained ground, the impact of court rituals in forming political culture and the conspicuous consumption of the court in stimulating economic growth has been examined.[10]

This historiography reflects the two dominant approaches that have governed the study of the economic relations between the court and the market. On the one hand, the court is seen as the recipient of the various taxes and funds that are extracted from the economy. In this regard, it has been emphasized that the increasing financial needs of the court, both for its pomp and especially for its wars, increased the court's intervention in the market. This brings into relief the renewed political clout of the princes, as they gradually subdued the once fiercely independent cities, and extracted a greater piece of the economic pie. On the other hand, the court is also seen as a dispenser of wealth because, by consolidating elite demand around the princely court, it generated demand, thus fueling the urban elite's luxury consumption and stimulating the economy as well. The princely court

[9] M. Boone, *Geld en macht. De gentse stadsfinanciën en de Bourgondische staatsvorming*, 1384-1453 (Ghent, 1990). Robert Stein, *Powerbrokers in the late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2001); *Urban Public Debts: Urban Government and the Market for Annuities in Western Europe 14th-18th centuries,* ed. M. Boone, K. Davids and P. Janssens (Turnhout, 2003); *Finance et financiers des princes et des villes à l'epoque bourguignonne,* ed. Jean-Marie Cauchies (Turnhout, 2004)

[10] Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, 1996); Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La Ville des cérémonies: Essai sur la communication politique dnas les anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons* (Turnhout, 2004); W. P. Blockmans, "The Burugndian Court and the Urban Milieu as Patrons in 15th Century Bruges," in Michael North ed. *Economic History and the Arts* (Köln, 1996); W. P. Blockmans, Antheun Janse, Holger Kruse, Robert Stein, "From territorial courts to one residence: The Low Countires in the late middle ages," and Marie-Thérèse Caron, Denis Clauzel, Jean Rauzier, Monique Sommier, "La cour des ducs de Bourgogne, 1369-1477," in *La cour comme institution economique*, ed. Maurice Aymard and Marzio A. Romani (Paris, 1998), 31-41; P. Stabel, "The Market-Place and Civic Identity in Late Medieval Flanders," in *Shaping Urban Identity in Late Medieval Europe,* ed. Marc Boone and Peter Stabel (Leuven, 2000).

becomes a deep-pocketed consumer, with the economic heft to distort normal market relations and favor certain luxury industries and trade.

Reviewed from a broader perspective, these approaches provide us with a sense of the interrelation between the nascent modern state, as embodied in the princely court, and the emerging modern economy, as realized in the urban market. It is also a continuation and revision of a historiography that can be traced back to the works of Werner Sombart, *War and Capitalism* and *Luxury and Capitalism*.[11] The first of these arguments has been more recently been pursued by Tilly's *Coercion, Capital and European State*, which concentrates on how the fiscal burden of waging war was the central challenge in the transition to a modern state, while the latter drew new attention after the publication of Elias' *Civilizing Process*, which established the cultural practices and influence of the court as the motor in the modernization of society.[12]

Yet, neither of these approaches truly exposed how the court as an economic actor interacted with the market. The first still considers the princely court foremost as a political institution that efficiently coerced wealth from the market, while the second views it as a cultural institution that distributed, if not squandered, wealth to co-opt and tame

[11] Werner Sombart, *Luxus und Kapitalismus* (Leipzig, 1913, translated as *Luxury and Capitalism*, Ann Arbor, 1967) and *Krieg und Kapitalismus* (Leipzig, 1913). The latter has unfortunately not been translated, and Sombart seems to plays down the role of war in his later works synthesizing his various threads of thought on capitalism. See the recent republication, Werner Sombart, *Economic Life in the Modern Age* (New Brunswick, 2001).

[12] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European State, A.D. 990-1992* (Oxford, 1990); C. Tilly and W. P. Blockmans, *Cities and the Rise of States in Europe, A.D.1000 to 1800* (Boulder, 1994); Norbert Elias, *Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Oxford, 1994) first published in English as *The History of Manners* (Oxford, 1978) and *State Formation and Civilization* (Oxford, 1982).

society. The demands of war could advance techniques of finance and unintentionally increase the power of 'moneyed' interests while the onus of consumption could spur commerce, and backhandedly create openings for mercantile wealth to ascend the ranks of nobility, but both these approaches do not provide us a clear vision of how the princely court was navigating this shifting ground of commercialization of society. Furthermore, considering that the court was still based on a feudal structure, it remains unclear how – and whether – it was more than simply an exploiter of urban wealth or an inadvertent generator of bourgeois power.[13]

In this chapter, I seek to answer these questions by examining the court of the Burgundian dukes in light of the recent advances in court studies, with a focus on the economic dimensions of the court. The first order is to define the court, which was nebulous in its day, and still causes much confusion. Following the lead of medieval court historians, I argue that the Burgundian court must be considered as an ongoing event or occasion, with the ducal chamber and household providing the structure that sustained its operations. The itinerant character of the court, as well as the personal and performative nature of princely rule, demanded a flexible structure different from previous feudal or late

[13] Here I use the term 'feudal' not in the strict legal sense described by Ganshof in his *Feudalism* (New York, Harper, 1964) but in the looser broader sense used by Marc Bloch in his *Feudal Society* (Chicago, 1961). For the Burgundian court of the fifteenth century, in the sense that the primary legitimacy of the Burgundian dukes was based on their lordship over disparate vassals, and that it was the fidelity, service and compensation based on this personal relationship that was the primary basis of their rule, it is possible to speak of their 'feudal' character. The term "feudal court" was first used in A. de Loisne, "Une cour féodale vers la fin du XIIe siècle. "L'hotel" de Robert II, comte d'Artois, *Bulletin philologique et historique* (1918), 84-143, cited in Malcom Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-west Europe, 1270-1380* (Oxford, 2001). On the debates regarding the meaning of the term "feudalism," Richard Abels, "The Historiography of a Construct: "Feudalism" and the Medieval Historian," *Journal: History Compass* 7:3 (2009): 1008-1031 provides the most recent and succinct review.

baroque courts. Next, I review the changes in the structure and administration of the Burgundian court during its expansion in the second half of the fifteenth century. Early modern historians have recently drawn attention to the administrative reforms that were initiated and implemented by princely courts, and the Burgundian court was an early adopter of as well as an innovator in some of the changes. Indirectly, these new perspectives draw us to an understanding of the court which was in many aspects akin to the market, and calls for renewed attention to the economic dimensions of the court. While historians have tried to measure the economic impact of the conspicuous consumption of the Burgundian court, tracing the material products necessary for chivalric performance leads us to see that it was only through the market that court culture could realize itself. This was the reason why the princely court was constantly "shopping" and we must look beyond economic impact of the court and seek to uncover how the court sought to navigate this commercialized world.[14]

II.

"In the court, I exist, and of the court, I speak, but what the court is, God knows, I know not."[15] This oft-quoted statement by the twelfth-century courtier Walter Map expresses the

[14] The phrase is from Peter Stabel, "For Mutual Benefit? Court and City in the Burgundian Low Countries" in *The Court as a Stage: England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. S. J. Gunn and A. Janse (Woodbridge, 2006), 115.

[15] Cited in Ralph A. Griffiths, "The Court during the War of the Roses," in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c.1450-1650*, ed. Ronald G. Asch (Oxford, 1991).

amorphous and nebulous nature of a court, both to past contemporaries as well as modern scholars. The difficulty stems from the multiple forms that a court *(cour, hof)* could take and various functions that were incorporated into it. In general usage, the court is often considered synonymous with the household of the ruler, or the physical residence of the prince, or the occasions on which the prince is present, or even the whole social environment around the prince. A leading historian of the late medieval court, Werner Paravicini, captures this protean yet elusive nature of the court, writing:

> The court is the political decision-making center and theater of power; the center of consumption and entertainment; the distribution and brokerage site of power, money, goods, social opportunities and the forming of taste, ideas and all trends of art; and it is a marriage market, an organ for the education and supervising of youngsters and rivals, but also an institution in which the heir and the younger sons of the father prove themselves while he lives, sometimes in horse-riding, always at the intersection of sacred and secular.[16]

With such a variety of functions imputed to the court, historians have often resorted to defining it by its greatest common denominator, the "entourage of the Prince."[17]

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[16] Werner Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (München, 1994), 71.

[17] Elton,"The Court" 25; M. G. A. Vale, *The Princely Court*, 22-25. Thus, Paravicini writes for the Burgundian court: "The court is obviously not only the ducal household or only the households of various princes of the house of Burgundy, but the court [is] in a broad sense, this moving and mutable world, which finds its center and its existential reason in the person of the prince. Under purview are not only the servants and courtiers listed in the ordinances of the household, but also parents and visitors, clerks and staff, servants of servants, merchants following the court, quartermasters and transporters, in a word, all those for whom *the duke and his entourage* were the source of all profits and all favors." (emphasis added) W. Paravicini, "Le fin du mythe bourguignon?" in *La cour de Bourgogne et l'Europe: Le rayonnement et les limites d'un modèle culturel*, ed. Werner Paravicini, Torsten Hiltmann and Frank Viltart (Ostfildern, 2013), 10.

Yet this bare-bones definition is still helpful as a starting point. It establishes two fundamental factors that set the grounds for the protean nature of the court: first, access and proximity to the prince, and second, the role and power of the prince. The court could take many forms, depending on how the prince interacted with his courtiers; these would be structured by the protocols of meetings, events, processions as well as by the layout of the princely residences and offices. The court could also play many roles, especially in an era before all the administrative, judicial and fiscal functions were separated out to independent organs, and the greater the power of the prince, the greater the pull and heft of the court.[18] Thus, at its most basic level, the court was a social body comprised of the prince as its focal point and courtiers who were defined by the varying degrees of access they had to the prince, and their consequent share in the authority and power of the prince.

However, defining the court in such abstract terms obscures how the court actually realized itself. Though the prince and those assembled around him were the components of the court, the court only came into being when the presiding prince "held court."[19] Especially during the earlier thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the assembly of courtiers with the prince mainly happened during major feasts of the liturgical year.[20] These

[18] The dukes of Burgundy oversaw and consolidated various institutions of governance that it had inherited from the various principalities that comprised the Burgundian realm, such as the regional councils (*Conseil de Flandre, Conseil de Brabant*, etc) and the regional chambers of accounts (*Chambre des Comptes à Lille, à la Haye,* etc). While these organs for the execution of justice and finance were gradually gaining a separate raison d'être independent of the person of duke, the court was still the site in which all major decisions regarding final judgments, fiscal policies as well as the personnel appointments were made. Jean-Marie Cauchies, "Le droit et les institutions dans les anciens Pays-Bas sous Philippe le Bon. Essai de synthèse," *Cahier de Clio* 123 (1995): 33-68. Schnerb, *L'état Bourguignon*," 228-261.

[19] Asch, "Introduction," in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility,* 9; Vale, *Princely Court*, 15.

[20] Vale, *Princely Court*, 28.

happenings were accompanied by elaborate rituals and ceremonies, entertainments in armor and rhetoric, and public dispensations of justice, as well as by dealings between the prince and his courtiers and foreign dignitaries regarding matters of the realm. It was in these moments that the court came about. In the case of the Burgundian court, the surviving writings of Aliénor de Poitiers – who wrote about her days as a lady in the household of Isabel of Portugal, duchess of Burgundy and mother of Charles the Bold – focus squarely on the ceremonies when mentioning the court, that is on such events as baptismals, banquets, the reception of dignitaries, and on the order of processions.[21]

The itinerant nature of the court for much of the late medieval and early modern era strengthened this notion of the court as an ongoing occasion and event. Even later, however, when the residence of the prince became more fixed, the retinue of the prince became more constant, and the whole entourage could congregate within the confines of the courtyard of an official residence, this essence of the court as realized in ceremonies would continue as well.[22] In this sense, scholars have considered the court foremost as an event or an occasion in which the authority and power of the prince was projected. Furthermore, the itinerant nature of the court for much of the late medieval and early modern era strengthened this notion of the court as an ongoing occasion and event.

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[21] "Eleonore de Poitiers. Les États de France (Les Honneurs de la cour)," ed. Jacques Paviot, *Annuaire-bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France* 1996 (Paris, 1998): 75-136. Though the treatise is presented as a memoir, the writing makes clear that she wished to leave a record of the protocols and etiquettes of the Burgundian court for posterity; it can thus be considered a "book of ceremonies." It is also noteworthy for making clear that Burgundian court ceremonies and manners were thought to preserve those of the French royal court.

[22] Griffiths, "The Kings Court," 48: "This constant round of ceremonies and events … reveal the fifteenth-century court to have been a ceremonious and deferential society. … the very essence of the court as a series of occasions."

Yet, these events and occasions needed a material structure to support and manage them, and here the household (*hôtel, maison, herberghe*) functioned as the permanent structure that made the court as a happening possible. The household was the personnel attached to the family of the prince to attend to their daily needs, providing food and drink, clothing and accommodation; they also were responsible for the family's travel and safety. By definition, these servants were in close proximity to the prince, though their intimacy could vary according to their rank and function. They were retained by the prince, provided with lodging and food, and paid salaries and often annuities. This household was also in charge of hosting and managing the events in which the entourage would assemble in the presence of the prince to hold court. If the courtiers were the figures who comprised the social body of the court, the household was the institutional frame that structured it. Thus, C. A. J. Armstrong aptly describes the relationship between the court and the household as follows: "the backbone of the court was the ducal household, an administrative institution which imparted to it discipline and durability."[23]

The surviving household ordinances and records from the court of Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy(1467-77), provide insight into how the court, as an ongoing occasion, was built upon the backbone of the household. Soon after Charles ascended to the duchy, he promulgated a new ordinance regarding the organization of his ducal household; this ordinance of 1469 was updated it again in 1474.[24] Compared to earlier ordinances issued

[23] Armstrong, "Golden Age," 58.

[24] The originals are conserved as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Hatton 13 and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms, fr. 3867; a shorter version listing the titles are preserved in AD Nord, B. 3376, nr. 113545. They are currently being compiled and prepared for publication by Holger Kruse, *Die Hofordnungen der Herzöge von Burgund* vol. 2, *Herzog Karl der Kühne 1467-77* (in preparation).

by his father, Philip the Good, which were usually lists of household servants, their names, their titles, and their daily wages, the ordinances of Charles are noteworthy for the level of detail and specifics they provide regarding the conduct of household officials.[25] Starting with the chapel, the ordinance outlined the various estates of the household, such as that of the chamberlains (*chamberllan*), the masters of the household (*maistre d'ostel*), the squires of the stable (*escuier d'escuierie*), the valets of the chamber (*varlet de chambre*), the keepers of the tapestries (*garde de la tapisserie*), etc. For each estate, the ordinance details the hierarchy and number of officers, but spills most ink on directions regarding their behavior, and it is surprising to see the list of admonishments and prohibitions assigned to each of them: not only the expected prohibitions on explicitly immoral behavior such as having concubines or visiting brothels, but also against foul or indecent conduct that would degrade the honor of the household. They also provide directives as to which office takes precedence in rank and thus as to who fills in for whom in times of absence. Furthermore, there are provisions for senior officials such as the chamberlain to mete out punishment. Together the contents of the ordinances support the notion that their first purpose was to provide structure and imparted discipline.

The ordinances not only provide a veritable manual of conduct for the officers, but also detail the protocols and procedures of court life. This aspect is especially prominent

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For a fuller treatment of these ordinances, see Werner Paravicini, "Ordre et règle. Charles le Téméraire en ses ordonnances de l'hôtel," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 143(1999): 311-359. The former is also treated in detail in Edward Tabri, *Political Culture in the Early Northern Renaissance: The Court of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy* (Lewiston, 2004), 32-44.

[25] Holger Kruse, *Die Hofordnungen der Herzöge von Burgund,* vol. 1, *Herzog Philipp der Gute 1407-1467* Instrumenta 15 (Ostfildern, 2005).

in the household ordinance reproduced by Olivier de la Marche, a master of the household in the court of Charles the Bold.[26] It is famous for its long description of the intricate ritual surrounding the ducal meal – the many hands that handle the presentation of the food, the kneeling and kissing of the servants each time they serve the duke bread and wine, the manner of cutting bread and presenting meat, the procedure for distributing the alms food.[27] It shows how the ordering of the household was a prerequisite and practice for the successful conduct and performance of ceremonies.

La Marche is also acutely aware of how the court could rapidly expand as necessary, for though the original ordinance of 1474 named a little over one thousand officers and servants of the household, he would nonetheless proclaim, "Although the duke of Burgundy is prince and lord of the most beautiful cities of the world, his household is so large that few towns can be found to lodge all its members."[28] The size of the court is compared to a city, and he goes on to explain how the household moves around and to name the officers in charge of managing and staging those movements. The household

[26] *S'Ensuyt l'Estat de la Maison du Duc Charles de Bourgoingne, dit le Hardy* published in *Mémoires d'Olivier de La Marche: maître d'hôtel et capitaine des gardes de Charles le Téméraire* vol. 4 ed. Henri Beaune et Jean d'Arbaumont (Paris, 1888), 1-94. The treatise is addressed to "my Lord, Victualler of Calais (*monseigneur l'avitailleur de Calais*)" and signed "compiled at the siege of Neuss in Germany in the month of November, 1474." According to la Marche's own recollection, when he later presented a copy of it to Maximilian I in 1501, it was written at the request of the English King. Werner Paravicini has done a detailed and remarkable analysis of the *Estat*,verifying its contents in reference to the court ordinances of its time, and measuring its claims against the current state of knowledge on the Burgundian court. Werner Paravicini, "La Cour de Bourgogne selon Olivier de la Marche" in *Publication du centre europeen d'Etudes Bourguignonns (XIVe-XVIe)* 43 (2003): 88-124.

[27] *Memoires* IV, *l'Estat* 21-24.

[28] *Memoires* IV, *l'Estat* 77-78. The comparison of the court with the city also alludes to the economic infrastructure necessary to sustain the ducal household. This is further discussed in section 4 of this chapter.

acted as a permanent yet flexible frame that could be expanded to hold court, as large as a city.[29]

Behind these detailed prescriptions regarding the conduct of the household servants and the elaborate description of the protocols of performing court rituals, there lies an uneven presentation of the actual role and functions of the officers within the court. These treatises on the organization of the household describe how the concentric hierarchy of the chamberlains, councilors (*conseiller*) and squires (*escuier*) was recreated in their proximity and access to the duke, but they disguise the fact that valets and servants also had immediate access to the duke which could translate to influence. They carefully rank the hierarchy of pantry keepers (*pannetiers*), cup-bearers (*eschansons*), and carvers (*escuyers tranchants*) and their precise role in the protocols of dining, yet they also allude to the fact that in most cases the actual duties were carried out by their subordinate (*aides*). The careful delineation and ordering of such titles reveal that they were important tools in honoring nobles of the realm and attaching them as courtiers of the prince, but they also betray the fact that the practical aspects of managing the court fell to other court functionaries.

This detachment between the real mechanisms of court life and the honor attached to court titles is made further evident by a peculiarly Burgundian invention: service by term (*par terme*).[30] First initiated during the rule of Philip the Good, the system of

[29] Later during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, this difference between the smaller retinue that served the prince, and the larger retinue in times of ceremony would be institutionalized into divisions such as the "curia minor" and "curia maior."

[30] Werner Paravicini, "Structure et fonctionnetment de la cour bourguignonne au xve siècle," in *A la cour de Bourgogne: Le Duc, son entourage, son train*. ed Jean-Marie Cauchies (Turnhout, 1998), 1-8.

distributing offices of the household to a larger number of courtiers, but allowing them to reside in the court (and be paid and provided for by the court) only on a semi-annual or quarterly basis was greatly expanded by Charles the Bold. Not only the terms of relatively humble offices such as cup-bearers of the kitchen and squires of the stable but even those of the highest such as chamberlains were shared between two to four persons, each serving for only half or a quarter of the year. This system of rotation became a central feature of the Burgundian court.

This underscores the degree in which household offices such as chamberlains and cup-bearers were becoming more and more honorary. The titles still conferred access to the prince, but their holders were increasingly detached from the actual operations of the household. Conversely, it also underlines the fact that the only people who were in continuous presence in the court and in constant proximity to the duke and thus in charge of the actual operations of the court were the lowest level courtiers such as the valets and aides. It also explains the existence of titles such as gentlemen of the household (g*entilzhommes de l'hostel*) or pensioners of the chamber (*chambellan pensionnaire*). They are titles that first appear in the Burgundian records, yet they did not have a fixed function in the organization of the household.[31] These offices were for nobles who were residing in the court, accompanying the prince, receiving compensation from the ducal treasury, yet not integrated into the household structure. Like the rotating chamberlains and cup-bearers, these were honorary titles that were given to nobles of the realm and foreign dignitaries, to provide them with rank and place within the court, to connect them

[31] Paravicini, "The Courts," 79.

to the court without tying them to the household, and to augment the public presentation when the court was held.[32] In addition, the Burgundian court had a very large contingent of foreign courtiers, often Italians.[33]

Thus, for the court of the Burgundian dukes, the surviving ordinances and treatises allow us to see how the organization of the household provided the backbone of the court, and also made possible the holding of rituals and ceremonies that realized the court. Yet these works also obscure the internal operations of the court which were becoming detached from the public presentation of the court, and call for investigation of other court records. They also provide us with little insight into the broad role and function that the princely court was playing within the Burgundian realm. To gain a more concrete understanding of these functions, we need to look further at the second part of the basic definition of the court: the role and power of the prince.

III.

The modern study of the princely court owes much of its revival to the seminal work of Nobert Elias, especially his *Court Society*.[34] Conceived as a sociological and historical

[32] The most famous being the public dispensation of justice, initiated by Charles the Bold, in which his whole court, twice a week, was obliged to attend in waiting, while the duke decided judgment on petitions that were brought to his attention. La Marche, *Memoires IV*, 4-7; Chastellain, *Oeuvres V*, 370-77; Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 182.

[33] R.J. Walsh, *Charles the Bold and Italy: Politics and Personnel* (Liverpool, 2005), 154.

[34] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (New York, 1983), originally published as *Die höfische Gesellschaft* (Luchterhand Verlag, 1969). Though Elias claimed he revised chapters for publication, it was actually a belated publication of his *Habilitation-schrift* at "Der Höfische Mensch: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des Hofes, der höfischen Geselleschaft und des absoluten Königtums." (Johann Wolfgang Goethe

study into the famed court of Louis XIV, the works of Elias brought the study of the court back into the mainstream. Traditionally, the history of the court had been confined to high politics and diplomacy, and the image of the court was saddled with decadence and corruption – a topos that existed from the very beginning of the history of the court.[35] However, by concentrating on unconventional sources such as the architecture of the court, the procedures of rituals, and prescriptions about etiquette, Elias conjured a narrative that placed the court at the center of the "Civilizing Process."[36] For Elias, court society was at the front and center of the historical process that was nothing less than the making of the modern man and the modern state: the internalization of self-restraint by the individual was foremost witnessed in the domestication of the nobility which resulted from the state's monopoly of violence and taxing authority.[37] Coinciding with the new found interest in cultural history, echoing the interests of historians in *mentalité,* and providing a grand

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University, Frankfurt am Main, 1933). Because the work was never published until the manuscript resurfaced in 1966 and only translated into English in 1983, it is often mistakenly seen as an extension of his *Civilizing Process*. Evidently, several portions of the book such as its "Introduction" and "Appendix I" were written anew for its publication in 1969, and according to the editorial notes, Elias is cited as having said that the later chapters on "Aristocratic Romanticism"(ch.8) and "On the Sociogenesis of the French Revolution"(ch.9) were new additions. The fact that the original *Habilitation-schrift* has not been preserved makes it impossible to verify exactly what was new. However, the basic structure and idea of the book was not altered, and it is it is clear from the footnotes that his argument was based on research he had conducted in the 1930s, making it a precursor to his later more famous work. See also, the French preface by Roger Chartier, for the new edition of *La Société de cour*, republished as "Social Figuration and Habitus: Reading Elias," in his *Cultural History* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, I988), 71-94; Review by R. J. Knecht in *The English Historical Review* 10:39 (April, 1986): 504-06.

[35] John Larner, "Europe of the Courts," *The Journal of Modern History* 55 (1983): 674-75.

[36] As Jeroen Duindam points out, it is also a return to eighteenth century fascination and obsession on etiquette, such as Voltaire's *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756).

[37] Nobert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. Edmund Jephcoot, rev. ed. (Oxford, 2000).

narrative to situate various case studies, the works of Elias brought the study of the court back into fashion.

In Elias's vision, the princely court became a gilded cage in which the nobles were entrapped, driven to compete by means of conspicuous consumption, further dependent on the largess of the prince, and untethered from their country domains. The warrior-class of nobility were 'tamed' into courtiers and preoccupied with ceremony, etiquette and display, precisely because the monarch had consolidated political power in his central organs of state which were occupied by the precocious bourgeoisie. [38] This vision was predicated on an older tradition emphasizing that the centralized bureaucracy was the antithesis of the personal and particularized rule of feudal lords. In turn, this understanding of the court transformed the previously scorned pomp and politesse of the court into potent marks of the propaganda and persuasion of princely rule, as well as symptoms of self-disciplining and fashioning.[39] Moreover, in this narrative, the Burgundian court is mentioned as the first stage in the transition from knights to courtiers.[40]

Elias's argument, although enduringly influential, also unleashed myriad criticisms that spurred further study of the court. Jeroen Duindam has been the most outspoken critic. Building on more recent research into the nobility, he drew attention to the fact that the

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[38] Jeroen Duindam, "Versailles, Vienna, and Beyond: Changing Views of Household and Government in Early Modern Europe" in *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective,* ed. J. Duindam, T. Artan and I. M. Kunt (Leiden, 2011), 401-04.

[39] This approach has been pursued most eagerly by the interdisciplinary work of *Centro Europa delle corti* (http://www.europadellecorti.it/), which focused mainly on the princely courts of the Italian renaissance. Larner, "Europe of the Courts", 670. Trevor Dean, "The Courts," *Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995), 139.

[40] Elias, Civilizing Process, 173. Aldo Scaglione, *Knights at Court : Courtliness, Chivalry and Courtesy From Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (Berkeley, 1991), 229-30.

historical evidence did not support Elias's thesis: the nobility were not totally severed from the money economy and thus dependent on the king, the nobility were not in "life-and-death" conflict with the high bourgeoisie as intermarriage was quite often the norm, and the king did not attain a monopoly of power but rather the high nobles also increased their power through patronage in the apparatus of the centralizing state. [41]

Pushing back against the narratives that removed the court from the decision making process or that viewed the court as a singular site of princely propaganda, historians have revised and enriched our understanding of the court. They have pointed to the continuing importance of the court as the focal point of personal rule by the prince as well as the main "point of contact" between the crown and elites.[42] They have emphasized how ceremonial aspects of the court were not only bound to princely propaganda but also could be appropriated by the subjects for their own agendas.[43] Furthermore, they have highlighted the differences between various courts of late medieval and early modern Europe, eschewing the urge to place case studies in a continuum tied to bureaucratization or modernization.[44]

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[41] Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court* (Amsterdam UP, 1994).

[42] G.R. Elton, "Tudor Government: The Points of Contact: III. The Court," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 26 (1976), 211-28.

[43] *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage, and Royalty 1400-1800,* A. G. Dikens ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977).

[44] Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Major Dynastic Rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2003).

This "new court history" provides fertile ground for understanding the role and function of the Burgundian court.[45] It draws our attention, first, to the renewed importance of the court as the center of decision-making. This aspect has been most forcefully argued by historians of the English court. David Starkey has shown how during the turn to the sixteenth century, the privy chamber was gradually separated from the household and attained status as the highest (informal) office of state. [46] By restricting and controlling access to the prince, the privy chamber strengthened princely control over the household, and in turn, his kingdom. Starkey notes that this invention, especially the position of the "Groom of the Stool" and his subordinates attached to the privy chamber, may have been modeled on the Burgundian court. But he doesn't pursue this point further.[47]

In creating and strengthening the privy chamber, Henry VII may have been emulating the court structure of Charles the Bold. On the one hand, unlike the English, the Burgundians already had consolidated major decision making powers within the ducal household. Already in the time of Philip the Good, there was the ducal council (*grand*

[45] The phase is borrowed from Hannah Smith "Court Studies and the Courts of Early Modern Europe," *The Historical Journal* 49:4 (2006), 1229-38. Most recently, the "Introduction" to *La cour du prince: cour de France, cours d'Europe, XIIe-XVe siècle,* ed. Murielle Gaude-Ferragu, Bruno Laurioux and Jacques Paviot, (Paris, 2011) claimed "the history of the court is in fashion." Much of this French historiography in court studies is assembled at the website http://cour-de-france.fr. The Society of Court Studies founded in 1995 has also provided an institutional framework to consolidate new research. http://www.courtstudies.org/. Resources for the research of the Burgundian court have been compiled at http://www.prosopographia-burgundica.org/

[46] David Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation: The Rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485-1547" in *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War,* David Starkey ed. (London ; New York: Longman, 1987), 71-118. The privy chamber later attained the casual named of the 'secret chamber' during the reign of Henry VIII.

[47] Starkey also mistakenly posits that the Groom was of distinctly lower status compared to his equivalents on the continent.

conseil). This was subsumed within the structure of the household and was the key administrative organ of state, which deliberated on major matters concerning the whole of the Burgundian realm.[48] The 1469 household ordinance of Charles the Bold formalized this arrangement further, by setting regulations on the council's meetings and procedures, as well as defining the membership of the council as the chamberlains and councilors of the household.[49] This was also the organ that would decide in advance which cases would be brought and what judgments would be pronounced at the famed public dispensation of justice by the court.[50]

On the other hand, like the creation of the English privy chamber, Charles the Bold had already initiated a policy of restricting access to his ducal chamber and empowering those who served his person. In theory, it was the first chamberlain that kept the keys to the ducal chamber (as well as the privy seal and his banner in battle), but because of the system of rotation noted above, it was the "personal Steward of the duke (*sommelier de corps du duc*)" – the Burgundian counterpart to the English Groom of the Stool – who in fact controlled daily access. The First Steward was considered a confidant of the duke, and his name appears as the recipient of gifts from towns that sought favor with the duke.[51] The comparison with the English case highlights how the Burgundian court also sought to

[48] Vaughn, *Philip the Good*, 170-72.

[49] Werner Paravicini, "Ordre et règle": 339-41.; J. van Rompaey, "Hofraad en Grote Raad in de hofordonnatie van 1 januari 1469" in *Recht en Instellingen in de Oude Nederlanden Tijdens de Middeleeuwen en de Nieuwe Tijd: Liber Amicorum Jan Buntinx* (Leuven, 1981), 303-24.

[50] Paravinici, "La Cour," 98.

[51] A. Derville, "Les Pots-de-vin dans le dernier tiers du XVe siècle (d'après comptes de Lille et de Saint-Omer), *Anciens Pays et Assemblées d'États* 80 (1985): 464. See chapter 2 for a full discussion of this position.

restrict access to the prince and thereby consolidate the (informal) power of the ducal chamber, even as it sought to institutionalize and bureaucratize the (formal) authority of the ducal council.[52]

This renewed focus on the political power of the court also leads to a new understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between the nobles and the prince. In parallel with the revisionist research into the nature of absolutism, historians have shown that the court acted as a meeting ground between the prince and his nobles as well as high dignitaries from other realms.[53] The congregation around the prince not only integrated nobles from widely dispersed regions of the realm, but also made the court a site of constant negotiation and bargaining for power. The centralization of power in the court made it a 'clearing house' of various interests that spanned patronage networks, factional alliances, and foreign influences.

This was especially true in the Burgundian court, where the person of the duke was the only bond uniting particularly disparate duchies, counties, lordships and towns. Because the Burgundian state was rooted in the French interior but had been built by

[52] The English case would to a degree further evolve along the Burgundian lines. Just as Henry VII had established the privy chamber in 1495, Henry the VIII would establish the privy council as a part of the royal household in 1540. It would function like the Burgundian ducal council where noble councilors close to the prince would gather to make major policy decision. David Starkey, "Court, Council, and Nobility in Tudor England" in *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility*, 175-203. Yet the differences remain in that the English case there would be overlap between the members of the privy chamber and council, whereas in the earlier Burgundian case, members of the ducal chamber did not serve in the ducal council. However, comparison with the contemporary Habsburg case is telling in that by the sixteenth century, the *sommelier de corps* du duc of Charles V was also a nobleman, a tradition would continue at the Spanish Habsburg court. It is indirect evidence of the growing prominence and importance of the *sommelier de corps*.

[53] For instance, J. Russell Major, *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy: French Kings, Nobles, and Estates* (Baltimore, 1994), 1-108.; D. M Loades, *The Tudor Court* (Totowa, 1987).

piecemeal annexation of Netherlandish territories there was a discrepancy in how the nobles of the land were integrated into the court.[54] Although historians once accepted that the Burgundian court successfully integrated all the nobility in this entire region under the banner of the Valois dukes, Werner Paravicini has shown that the ducal household offices were nevertheless dominated by Burgundian, Picard and Brabantine nobles, while Mario Damen suggests that for nobles from Holland and Zeeland, the court was not the major forum for their integration.[55]

Moreover, unlike the established monarchies of France or England, the Burgundian realm was a recent creation, and Burgundian power "was something of a syndicate in which people took stakes so as to share in the fortunes of the house."[56] The Burgundian realm, although indeed rich and splendid, was thus an elegant and formidable exterior built on shaky political foundations, and this situation was aggravated by the power of the patronage networks and conflicting alliances within the court. For example, the the Croy family, although ostensibly bound to the court, had a dual loyalty to the king of France because of their vast possessions in the French kingdom.[57] As the charter of the order of

[54] The following list chronicles the year in which each principality was acquired: Duchy of Burgundy (1363), County of Flanders, Artois, and Free County of Burgundy (1384), County of Namur (1429), Duchy of Brabant, Lothier, and Limburg (1430), County of Holland, Zeeland and Hainaut (1432), Duchy of Luxembourg (1443), Bishopric of Utrecht (1456), Prince-Bishopric of Liège (1456), Somme towns (1465), Duchy of Guelders (1473), Duchy of Lorraine (1475).

[55] Vaughn, *Philip the Good*, 162-3; Werner Paravicini, "Expansion et intégration. La noblesse des Pays-Bas à la cour de Philippe le Bon," *Bijdragen en Medelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 95 (1980), 298-314.

[56] C. A. J. Armstrong, "La Toison d'Or et la loi des armes," in *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1983), 375-82; "Golden Age," 60.

[57] The Croy clan, who were keen on protecting their interest in both the French Kingdom and the Burgundian realm, are representative of this situation. This was also the reason why many prominent

the Golden Fleece implicitly made clear, the dukes of Burgundy were first among equals, not sovereigns over subjects.[58]

The administrative reforms of Charles the Bold were to a large degree aimed at curbing such centrifugal forces, concentrating more power to himself, and detaching and elevating himself from his courtiers. By fixing the rules on convening and recording the ducal council, he was able to ensure that all matters of state would receive due consideration by the majority of the councilors, rather than be decided by the chancellor or councilors who happened to be on hand. By 1473, Charles started adding the phrase "sovereign lord (*souverain seigneur*)" in his ordinances and correspondence, even though it was a title traditionally reserved for kings.[59] Also, as historians have highlighted, even before he became duke, Charles invoked the regal accusation of high treason (*laesae majestatis crimen*) against nobles and courtiers whom he thought were seeking to harm him.[60] This imperative of controlling the court and household would lead to a tightening of his circle around his own chamber, once again highlighting its importance. As much as

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Burgundian courtiers such as Philip Commynes felt compelled to turn to Louis XI of France when forced to choose sides.

[58] The order of the Golden Fleece was established by Philip the Good in 1430. Adhering to the fiction of the knights of Arthurian tales, the knights of the Golden Fleece were considered equals, even as the grand mastership was hereditary to the house of Burgundy. Thus, knights of the order would only be subject to trials in which member knights were the jury, and each knight including the grand master was to be subject to review and admonishment by the others. This notion of equals was evident in the chapter meeting of 1468, and again 1473, when the knights reprimanded Charles on several points of conduct. See Vaughn, *Charles the Bold*, 172-8.

[59] The military ordinance of 1473, reproduced in H. L. G. Guillaume, *Histoire de l'organization militaire sous les ducs de Bourgogne* (Brussles, 1848), 191; partially translated in Vaughn, *Charles*, 208-9; Henri Stein, "Un diplomate bourguignon du XVe siècle: Antoine Haneron" *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes 98* (1937): 283-348.

[60] Wim Blockmans, "Crisme de leze magesté: Les idées politiques de Charles le Téméraire," in *Libre pensée et pensée libre - combats et débats, hommage à André Uyttebrouck* (Brussels, 1996)

the Burgundian court was a tool of integration of the nobility, it was also an arena in which the power relations between the prince and the courtiers were constantly negotiated.

This fluid nature of the court also underscores its relative openness. Not only did the rotation of household officers mean that there was a high rate of turnover among courtiers, but the continuous jockeying among patronage networks to place their clients in various positions as well as the stream of foreign dignitaries and ambassadors meant the entourage of the prince was in constant flux. This also included patronage in the wider sense of supporting artists and artisans to enliven the material culture of the court. This aspect of the court ensured that it would incorporate new men into its ranks of courtiers, and that jostling as well as mingling between them was the norm. Thus, new understandings of the court have shown how the court was, in comparison to other organs and bodies, an open institution. As Malcolm Smuts has emphasized for the English court in the seventeenth century, "the court always remained a place where people of very different backgrounds and outlooks mingled, and where political or religious differences rarely stood in the way of social contacts."[61]

The Burgundian court was certainly also an arena of competing patronage open to the infusion of new men. As Graeme Small has astutely revealed, George Chastellain, the official chronicler of Philip the Good, who left a most romantic and vivid account of chivalric court life, was in fact the son of shipper from Ghent and had attained his position

[61] R. Malcolm Smuts, "The Structure of the Court and the Roles of the Artist and Poet under Charles I," *The Court Historian* 9:2 (London, 2004).

through the patronage network of Philippe, lord of Ternant.[62] Olivier de la Marche was able to gain entry into the court as a page at the request of Antoine de Croy, one of the power brokers of the Burgundian court.[63] Though the La Marche family had been in the service of the Burgundian dukes for at least two generations, mainly as local officials, it was the family connections through marriage that provided him a foothold into the court. After entering the court, it was the support of the forementioned Philippe of Ternant, his life-long benefactor, that ensured his rapid rise through the ranks of the court hierarchy.[64] The meteoric rise of Odot Molain, from a merchant in the duchy of Burgundy to the rank of ducal councilor, was a rare but striking case of how the court was a venue for ambitious men of humble origins.[65] Furthermore, though it is less well documented, the itinerant nature of the court, and the inevitable mingling of household officers and servants with individuals of the cities they were visiting, ensured that the court was always a bustling stage of social interaction.[66] The court of the Burgundian dukes was a relatively open

[62] Graeme Small, *George Chastelain and the Shaping of Valois Burgundy: Political and Historical Culture at Court in the Fifteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 1997), 9-42, 51-64. Small choses the spelling "Chastelain" since it was the one mainly used by the Chronicler himself, even though he has been usually spelt as "Chastellain" ever since Kervyn de Lettenhove compiled a critical edition of his surviving works in the late nineteenth century. For the sake of consistency with previous works being cited, I use the traditionally spelling.

[63] Alistair Millar, "Olivier de la Marche and the Court of Burgudy, c.1425-1502" (University of Edinburgh, Dissertation, 1996), 1-15. As Millar notes, this is also probably why the *Memoires* of La Marche portray Antoine de Croy in a favorable light, despite that the fact that he was considered a traitor by La Marche's lord, Charles the Bold.

[64] Millar, "La Marche," 18-24.

[65] Jean Bartier, "L'ascension d'un marchand bourguignon au XVe siècle," *Annales de Bourgogne* 15 (1943), 185-206.

[66] See chapter 3 for some investigation into these relations.

arena in which people of various statuses and backgrounds interacted and negotiated: brokering power, sharing fortunes, and displaying rank in public ceremonies.

In this sense, the Burgundian court was like the marketplace of the towns and cities of the Burgundian Netherlands: public sites of gathering, dealing, and display between people of differing means and standings. In this respect, it was not unlike Elisabeth Lalou's characterization of the French royal household: "the court, in brief, resembled a market, difficult to regulate, with constant comings-and-goings"[67] If anything, the Burgundian court was even more like a market – more permeable, more diverse, more market-like. These features not only created lines of clientage and brokerage, but also required interpersonal skills befitting a market. The princely court resided in the city, not in a castle in the country, and court ceremonies were often held literally in the public square of the market. The physical and psychological distance between the court and the market were not far at all.

Thus, we may even openly wonder, as Trevor Dean does, whether it was "this very openness … that explains the enormous circulation and success of manuals of specifically courtly behavior" in the following centuries.[68] Contra Elias, we may venture that the famed courtliness and politesse demanded and witnessed in princely courts were also skills

[67] E. Lalou, "Le fonctionnement de l'hôtel du roi du milieu du XIII au milieu du XIVe siècle" in *Vincennes: aux origins de l'état modern*, ed. J. Chapelot and E. Lalou (Paris, 1996), 146, cited in Vale, *Princely Court*, 35.

[68] Dean, "The Courts," 144. This, of course, is an allusion to Castiglione's *The Courtier*. Castiglione himself, though in a slightly different context, also mentions that the court of Duke Federic "seemed more like a city than a mere palace." Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, George Bull trans. (London, 1967), 41. On its reception see Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (London, 1996).

that could be acquired and transferred from the marketplace to the court. The varied and broad agendas of new court history provide a lens to reconsider the ongoing prominent political role and social function played by the Burgundian court. But it also backhandedly demonstrates how much the court was akin to the market, and ultimately calls our attention to the economic aspects of the court.

IV.

Even within the new court studies, the economic dimension of the princely courts during the late medieval and early modern era has been relatively understudied, even though there have been general assertions regarding the economic role of the court. The court's economic role has often been understood in terms of the demand generated by its conspicuous consumption, that is, the enormous expenditure on the material culture of the court necessary to maintain and enhance its prestige and splendor.[69] This understanding is generally based on the imposing image of Versailles and the ostentation of the court of Louis XIV, as well as the various princely courts that followed in its wake such as that of Dresden.[70] But during the late medieval and early modern periods, the court of the Burgundian dukes was considered the wealthiest and best ordered by its contemporaries

[69] A. G. Dickens, "Monarchy and Cultural Revival: Courts in the Middle Age" in *The Courts of Europe*, 8-32.

[70] It is also an extension of the argument that the growth of princely and noble demand for luxury goods was the motor behind the revival of trade and commerce after the turn of the millennium. See Edwin S. Hunt and James Murray, *A History of Business in Medieval Europe, 1200-1550* (Cambridge, 1999).

and has been named the "trendsetter' by modern historians.[71] The "wasteful splendor" expressed through Burgundian court ceremonies such as the Feast of the Pheasant in 1454 or the marriage of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York in 1468 have been ingrained in popular memory of the Middle Ages.[72] In addition, the famed patronage of art by the Burgundian dukes, such as retaining the painter Jan van Eyck as a ducal valet (*valet de chambre*) has been considered a major factor in the blooming of the Northern Renaissance. The Burgundian court both benefited from and contributed to the vibrant luxury trade and manufacture in the Burgundian Netherlands. [73]

Yet much of this history has been asserted rather than excavated. Though the financial history of the Burgundian dukes has been richly researched, the lack of complete sources has made it difficult to track precisely the flow of investments in art, calculate the volume of luxury goods purchased, or measure the stimulus effect of demand generated by the court and its milieu.[74] Still, historians have tried to conjecture the demand through

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[71] Huizinga, *Autumn,* 42, quoting Christine de Pisan and Leo von Rozmitals; Dean, "The Courts,"138.

[72] Huizinga, *Autumn*, 302.

[73] Wim Blockmans, "The Creative Environment: Incentives to and Functions of Bruges Art Production" in *Petrus Christus in Renaissance Bruges: An Interdisciplinary Approach,* M. W. Ainsworth ed. (New York, 1995). Blockmans' emphasis that though the demand of the court was not the single most important stimulus, the court was a trend setter, and aggregate demand by the nobles and urban elites who sought to emulate the tastes of the court was significant.

[74] Michel Mollat, "Recherches sur les finances des Ducs Valois de Bourgogne," *Revue historique* 219 (1958): 285-321 was an important first attempt to measure the magnitude of Burgundian fiances, while Maurice-Aurelien Arnould, "Une estimation des revenus et des dépenses de Philippe le Bon en 1445," *Recherches sur l'histoire des finances publiques en Belgique*, vol. 3, (Brussels, 1973): 131-219; Arnould, "Le premier budget du duc Charles de Bourgogne 1467-1468," *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire* 150(1984): 226-271 reconstructs the total incomes for well documented years. Andrée van Nieuwenhuysen, *Les finances du duc de Bourgogne, Philippe le Hardi, 1384-1404* (Brussels, 1984) provides an overview of the basic structure and size of Burgundian finances.

proxy methods, and there have been several different approaches to measuring its economic impact.

Before we examine the details, it is important to dispel and qualify certain myths regarding the wealth of the Burgundian court. Jean-François Lassalmonie recently aggregated and compared data from various secondary sources and arrived at the following conclusion: "The duke of Burgundy was very wealthy, but the king of France was even wealthier."[75] In terms of sheer revenue, the Burgundian realm was not the richest in Europe, even at the pinnacle of its power in the 1470s when Charles the Bold's total revenue was approximately 1,800,000 pounds, equal to about 35 tons of fine silver.[76] The kingdom of France was still far more vast and thus could mobilize more resources than Burgundy, while the densely populated cities of the Northern Italy such as Florence and Venice would trump Burgundy in terms of revenue per capita or per square kilometer. Even the duchy of Brittany extracted slightly more revenue per square kilometer, while England edged out Burgundy in terms of revenue per capita.[77] This was not a surprising situation, considering the middling size of Burgundy, caught between territorial kingdoms and city-states.

Yet what made the Burgundian court so memorable to contemporaries, and makes it so remarkable to modern historians, is the fact that its revenue increased during the fifteenth century, while all the other major kingdoms and principalities witnessed a

[75] Jean François Lassalmonie, "Le plus riche prince d'Occident?" in *La cour de Bourgogne et l'Europe*, 82.

[76] Lassalmonie, "Le plus riche," 65.

[77] Lassalmonie, "Le plus riche," 70-71.

decrease.[78] In an era of general contraction and erosion of income, the successive Valois dukes of Burgundy stood out for having more and more disposable funds to spend. The source of this increasing revenue was, of course, the gradual absorption of the greater Low Countries by the Burgundian dukes during the fourteenth century. Together with Northern Italy, the Low Countries boasted the highest concentration of wealth in Europe, and it was by slowly unifying the whole region under their suzerainty that the successive dukes of Burgundy were able to go against the grain and attain their singular fame. Furthermore, the dukes were successful in extracting more and more extraordinary income from the cities, mostly in the form of aids, but also as levies, each time they subjugated the fiercely independent cities that periodically rose up in rebellion: Bruges in 1437, Ghent in 1449-53, and Liege in 1469.[79]

It also seems to be true that the Burgundian dukes spent lavishly on their court. As the official chronicler, George Chastellain, proudly proclaimed,

> After the deeds and exploits of war, which attain glory, the household [estat domestique] is the first thing that meets the eye, and that which it is therefore most necessary to conduct well and arrange in order. Thus, as the nobility circle the prince, by which they decorate him and adorn and elevate him, the prince usually places over a hundred knights at his household [maison], barons and heralds and knights of the best attire and sort.80

[78] Lassalmonie, "Le plus riche," 72.

[79] Blockmans and Prevenier, *Promised Lands*, 142-150 provides an overview of the increasing finances.

[80] Chastellain, *Oeuvres* V, 364.

The various fluctuations in annual expenses, often aggravated by those expenses related to war, do not allow for a consistent review of the relative weight of spending on the court vis-à-vis other expenditures. Also, the fragmented nature of the financial administration as well as its surviving records make it difficult to ascertain how much was spent on the court. But the few years for which we have relatively complete records do provide a glimpse of how heavy court expenditure was. For instance, during 1440s, the expense related to the ducal household, including the household of the duchess and his son, and purchases of fur, jewelry and liveries held steady between 125,000 to 150,000 pounds.[81] This is about 3 to 4 times the total expenditure of the city of Ghent, the most populous city in the Burgundian realm, during the same period.[82] For the year 1474-75, the expenses of the court treasurer (*argentier*) and household together have been estimated to be approximately 400,000 pounds.[83] This would amount to about 6 to 7 times the total expenditure of city of Bruges, the major emporium of the realm.[84] These estimates do not account for other expenditures related to the court, such as the upkeep and building of ducal residences, or payments of pensions to visiting nobles and gifts to ambassadors. Though court expenses and city

[81] M.-Th. Caron, D. Clauzel, J. Rauzier and M. Sommé, "La cour des ducs de Bourgogne, 1369-1477: consommation et redistribution, " in *La cour comme institution économique*, ed. M. Aymard and M. Romani (Paris, 1998): 31-41.

[82] Boone, *Geld en Macht*, 94-98.

[83] It is also quite surprisingly close to the sums that La Marche mentions in his *l'Estat*, 10-11; still, these are rounded averages, for exact sums can fluctuate widely depending on extraordinary expenses. For instance, the expenses of the argentier in 1468 were 660,000 pounds because of the confluence of the siege of Liege, the wedding of Charles the Bold, and the chapter meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece. In the next year (1469), which was relatively eventless, the expenses of the argentier would fall to approximately 360,000 pounds.

[84] Jelle Haemers, *For the Common Good: State Power and Urban Revolts in the Reign of Mary of Burgundy 1477-1482* (Turnhout, 2009), 188-89.

expenditures are both incomplete and not exactly commensurable, these comparisons do provide an idea of the relative scale.

Impressive as these numbers are, it is still difficult to measure their impact on the local economy. Based on the household ordinances and surviving daily payrolls, historians have tried to estimate the size of the court, including officers, servants and their horses, and then extrapolate the total demand generated by the court using the average wage paid to each courtier. They hypothesize that, even after deducting for the money spent on food, the demand generated by the courtiers could have amounted to 10 to 15 per cent of that generated by the total population of a large city in the Burgundian Netherlands.[85] In itself, that would be a significant boost to the local economy. But, as Peter Stabel points out, this misses the fact that the court was mostly itinerant, and thus the demand it generated was not concentrated on one city. By estimating the total urban income in the major cities of Flanders and then comparing it with court demand divided by the numbers of days the court resided in each city, he concludes that its economic impact would be quite muted.[86]

Both these arguments are insightful yet incomplete because the demand generated by the itinerant court cannot be confined to the wages paid to courtiers. Courtiers not only drew on their own incomes to attend and impress at court, but their spending habits were also emulated by urban elites and visiting dignitaries, thus increasing overall demand. Also, the duke would establish permanent residences in major cities, some of which were

[85] Wim Blockmans, A. Janse, H. Kruse and R. Stein, "From territorial courts to one residence. The Low Countries in the middle ages" in *La cour comme institution économique*, 17-28.

[86] Stabel, "Mutual Benefit", 105-08: 0.7 % for Bruges, 0.45 % for Ghent.

occupied by other members of the ducal family, such as the duchess, and these residences generated smaller but constant demand. This also lured other nobles and courtiers to set up their own residences in those cities, boosting the economic impact of the court. Cities often sought to attract the court to their town with incentives for both the prestige and profit it would bestow.[87]

Beyond raw numbers, it is important to remember that splendor of the Burgundian court was built on the sumptuous material culture of court life. To better understand the economic aspect of the court, it is necessary to track the objects that constituted this material culture, foremost the liveries and textiles that adorned the ducal household, as well as the precious metal works, jewelry and art that were prominently displayed. The surviving fiscal records of the Burgundian dukes provide a vivid sense of how much of the luxury items were procured from the major markets of the Flemish and Brabantine urban network, in particular Bruges. As Stabel's analysis shows, much of the luxury goods were procured from Bruges, and then Brussels and Lille.[88] Bruges was the main commercial gateway for luxury goods from Italy, fur from the Baltic, as well as a center of artistic production. Lille was a major trading center for textiles, while Brussels was gradually becoming the city of choice for the dukes. The consumption generated by the court

[87] For instance, the city council of Mechelen 'lobbied' the duke and his top-level officials with gifts, hoping Mechelen would be chosen as the location for major central institutions, and they 'subsidized' courtiers who sought to buy property or build new homes in Mechelen. Walter Prevenier, "Mechelen circa 1500: A Cosmopolitan Biotope for Social Elites and Non-conformists," in *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. Dagmar Eichberger (Leuven, 2005), 36.

[88] Stable, "Mutal Benefit," 113-14.

followed the hierarchy of the urban network, and in this sense, its overall economic impact was not so much disruptive as it was complementary.[89]

Thus, the Burgundian court was enmeshing itself in a world already structured by commerce, rather than creating a world of commerce around itself. The major economic issue for the Burgundian court was not so much how to control and command the economy as it was how to engage in, navigate in and harness the energy of the urbanized and commercialized landscape of the Low Countries. While the princely courts of Europe had always drawn their wealth from the existing economy, both as owners of large domains and extractors of tribute from subjects, by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the traditional right of princes to claim various obligatory services from their subjects – usually in the form of housing and provisions for the upkeep of the court as it travelled through the lands – was transformed into money payments that were progressively declining in importance.[90] By the thirteenth and fourteenth century, the princely courts of the Low Countries were finding that their own domains could no longer satisfy all their material needs.[91] In addition, because the Burgundian dukes had inherited a patchwork of domains and residences from the various dukes and counts they succeeded, produce and revenue from these sources were often transferred directly to regional residences or

[89] R. van Uytven, "Splendor and Wealth? Art and Economy in the Burgundian Netherlands," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 10 (1992), 101-24.

[90] Jack Bernhardt, "Fordum, Gistum, Servitium Regis" *Medieval Germany: An Encyclopedia* (Garland, 200), 363-5. See also the extensive study by Carlrichard Brül, *Fodrum, gistum, servitium regis,* 2 vols. (Cologne, 1968).

[91] MalcomeVale, *Princely Court*, 80-93.

officials, with only a portion being sent to the ducal court.[92] Rather, in the highly commercialized economy of the greater Low Countries, the Burgundian dukes drew their revenue by gradually monetizing feudal rights, such as fees from courts of justice administered by the ducal baliffs, tolls on waterways such as Gravelines in Bruges, and increasingly on direct aids extracted from subjects.[93]

As a result, the Burgundian court provisioned itself to a significant extent through commercial transactions in the urban markets where it resided, a task made possible in part by the geographical scale of its realm and the dense urbanization of the Low Countries.[94] Even on the move the court was close to urban markets where both basic provisions and luxury goods could be easily obtained, while its major residences were all situated in the major cities of the urban network: Lille, Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, and the Hagues. This easy access to major commercial entrepôts and industrial centers provided the Burgundian dukes with an advantage in acquiring luxury goods and rare items early sought by the princes and nobles of Europe: not only the fine woolen fabrics of the Low Countries but

[92] Van Nieuwenhuysen, *Les finances du duc de Bourgogne* (1990) considers about one third reached the treasury of the receiver general of all finances; Mollat, *Recherches sur les finances*, emphasizes how there was no notion of an overall 'budget' nor a 'central' treasury in the modern sense.

[93] Blockmans and Prevenier, *Promised Lands*, 142-5; Van Bavel, *Manor and Market,* 264-65. Many of these tolls were often farmed out. For instance, the Gravelines toll was farmed out to Tommaso Portinari in 1465, for the annual sum of 16,000 francs for five years. Gerard Nijsten, *In the Shadow of Burgundy: The Court of Guelders in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2004) also shows how a smaller duchy adjusted to dwindling revenue from its demesne by monetizing his feudal rights.

[94] In contrast, the itinerant courts of the Carolingians in the early middle ages as well as the Ottonians and Salians of the high middle ages were dependant on royals palaces and allied ecclesiastical institutions to provision their travels, often including long travels in camps. Brül, *Fordum*; Rosamond McKitterick, "A King on the Move: The Place of an Itinerant Court in Charlemagne's Government," *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective* (2011). Furthermore, luxury goods vital court life were acquired through annual campaigns of plunder, gift exchange with other courts, or tribute from vassal realms.

also Italian imports of silk and spices were available in the urban markets of the Low Countries.

Although the rich international and regional trade carried out in the Burgundian Netherlands provided the court the necessary infrastructure, that alone does not explain how the court manged to take advantage of it. As we have seen above, the court, as the entourage of the prince, was foremost a continuous event or series of occasions. It was supported by the ducal household, with the ducal chamber as its center, and open to the mingling of many persons. To understand how this court interacted with the commercial world in which it lived, we need to move from an institutional approach to a biographical and prosopographical one. We need to examine the courtiers who were directly in contact and responsible for the dealings between the court and the market.

Chapter 2.

Of Keepers and Stewards,

or the 'Courtier-cum-Entrepreneurs' of the Burgundian Court

I.

In 1472, the Italian medalist, diplomat and writer Giovanni di Candida was named secretary to Charles the Bold, the last Valois duke of Burgundy.[1] Having most likely joined the court a few years earlier, he remained in service at the Burgundian court until 1480, when he left for the French royal court.[2] As the ducal secretary, Candida became a member of Charles' inner circle, writing court correspondence and ordinances on his behalf, and at times undertaking diplomatic missions to Italy. But what draws the attention of later historians is the series of portrait medallions Candida produced during this time, depicting notable persons in the ducal court.[3]

[1] The career of Candida is detailed in Victor Tourneur, "Jehan de Candida: diplomate et médaillier au service de la maison de Bourgogne, 1472-1480," *Revue Belge de Numismatique et de Sigillographie* 70 (Brussels, 1914), 381-411.

[2] Tourneur, "Jehan de Candida," 297-8. As a Neapolitan who was exiled from his own country, he could not return to his homeland after the sudden death of Charles the Bold in the Battle of Nancy in 1477. In his subsequent service to Louis XI of France, he turned to the writing of history. R.J. Walsh, "The coming of humanism to the Low Countries: Some Italian influences at the court of Charles the Bold," *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 25 (1976), 163, n. 67.

[3] George F. Hill, *Medals of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1920), 73; Tourneur, "Jehan de Candida" *Revue Belge de Numismatique et de Sigillographie* 71 (Brussels, 1919), 301-3. For a better reproduction of the medallion of Jehan le Tourneur, see *Grande encyclopédie de la Belgique et du Congo*, vol. 2 (Bruxelles, 1953), 443, Fig. 415. The medals are currently dispersed between the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. For art historians, these are considered the first surviving instances of Italian Renaissance medallions produced north of the Alps.

These medallions represented a commemoration of the Burgundian court at the height of its power and glory.[4] The medallion series naturally included the likeness of the Duke himself as well as his half-brother and First Chamberlain Anthony, his daughter and sole heir Mary, and her husband Maximilian of Habsburg. It also included major figures representing the authority and prestige of the court, such as Jean Carondelet, the first president of Parliament of Mechelen, and Jacques Galiot, a captain of one of the companies of ordinance.[5] The Parliament was the newly instituted high court of justice, which was the culmination of Charles' efforts to negate the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Paris over his domains and usurp the royal prerogative of Louis XI.[6] The companies of ordinance was the newly formed standing army, modeled after the French but largely filled by Italian mercenaries, which comprised the backbone of Charles' formidable military.[7]

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[4] By the early 1470s, Charles the Bold had recovered by force the Somme towns including Amiens and St. Quentin from Louis XI, suppressed the rebellions in Ghent and Liège, and purchased or conquered the lands of Alsace and the Duchy of Guelders. He was also widely thought to be seeking kingship from the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick III of Habsburg, to consolidate and legitimize his rule over the various domains. For a discussion regarding the latter, see Richard Vaughan, *Charles the Bold: The Last Valois Duke of Burgundy* (London, 1973), 125-154. This fame of the Burgundian court, as well as Charles' preference for Italian courtiers and commanders, had drawn many Italians, including Candida to his circle as well.

[5] Jean Carondelet (1428-1502), lord of Champvan and Solre, knight of Burgundy, successfully led diplomatic missions to the kings of France and England before becoming the first president of the *Parlement de Malines*/*Grote Raad van Mechelen*. *Biographie nationale de Belgique*, vol. 3 (Brussels, 1872), 341-2; Jacques Galiot (c.1420-1488, also Jacopo or Giacomo Galeota) was a Neapolitan commander who was considered by Charles as "his most valiant soldier." Richard J. Walsh, *Charles the Bold and Italy (1467-1477): Politics and Personnel* (Liverpool, 2005), 375.

[6] J. van Rompaey, *De Grote Raad van de hertogen van Bourgondië en het Parlement van Mechelen* (Brussels, 1973) is the best modern study of the institution. See also his "Hofraad en Grote Raad in de hof ordonnantie van 1 januari 1469" in *Festschrift Jan Buntinx* (Louvain 1981), 303-24.

[7] Philippe Contamine, *Guerre, état et société à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1972) and "L'armée de Charles le Téméraire: expression d'un état en devenir ou instrument d'un conquérant?' in *Aux armes, citoyens! Conscription et armée de métier des Grecs à nos jours*, ed. M. Vaïsse (Paris, 1998), 61-77. For a contrarian view see David S. Bachrach, "A Military Revolution Reconsidered: The Case of the Burgundian State under the Valois Dukes," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 15 (1998), 9-17. An updated

Yet, alongside these medals displaying Burgundian luminaries survives that of a certain Jehan Le Tourneur, who had no claim to prominence other than his duty as the First Steward (*premier sommelier de corps du duc*) of the duke.[8] Unlike other figures in the medallion series, Le Tourneur was neither a high ranking figure in the court hierarchy nor a powerful lord with an independent power base. He was not of any recognizable illustrious lineage, nor had he won any other worldly fame, in battle or in letters. Yet Candida, from his intimate knowledge of the workings of the Burgundian court, placed Jehan Le Tourneur among the ranks of the most powerful and influential courtiers. What important role in the court did he fulfill to merit such honor?

Modern historians who have studied the Burgundian court have not left Le Tourneur unnoticed, although there is no dedicated biographical work on him.[9] For instance, in his study of the Burgundian court, Werner Paravicini mentions Le Tourneur as one of those, who by the virtue of their intimacy with the prince, wielded informal power

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study of Burgundian military organization is currently under preparation by Bert Verwerft at Ghent University.

[8] Here, I have translated "*Sommelier de corps*" as a "personal steward" following the description in *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* (http://www.atilf.fr/dmf) in which the *Sommelier de corps* is entered as an "*officier de la chambre attaché à la personne de qqn.*" Fifteenth-century Dutch sources provide the translation "*Sommelier vanden live.*" Because it defeats exact translation, it is usually left in the original in most secondary works. The difficulty arises because, despite its common use, the precise role, rank and function referred to differ between era and place. At least in the Burgundian context, the title initially referred to an attendant or steward to the ducal household who was a non-noble, separate from that of the First Chamberlain, which was held by nobles and more a ceremonial position. By the time of Emperor Charles V in the sixteenth century, himself the great-grand son of Charles the Bold, the office was combined with that of the grand chamberlain and became the preserve of nobles.

[9] Tourneur, "Jehan de Candida," 24-28, 45-46 provides the first sketches of Jehan Le Tourneur, and especially of the meteoric rise of his descendants through the Burgundian court.

and influence, despite their lack of status.[10] Richard Vaughan also notes that he was one of the members of Charles's entourage who were dressed in fine garments to impress in their highly anticipated meeting with Emperor Frederick.[11] He was no doubt close to the duke because of his position as his personal attendant, but his role must have extended beyond that for him to receive such recognition. Within the court, Jehan Le Tourneur seems to have performed a visible and important function, evident to contemporaries, even if it is rather obscure to modern historians. This makes Jehan Le Tourneur a case worth examining. If we understand what made Le Tourneur so important, we will better understand a nature of this princely court that was obvious to its courtiers, if not to ourselves.

In this chapter, I begin to reveal the commercial operations of the Burgundian court by uncovering the career and role of courtiers such as the First Steward, Jehan Le Tourneur. I examine the surviving fiscal accounts of court, which prominently recorded the functions such figures performed in the ducal court. These accounts reveal the multitude of transactions that low-level courtiers carried on with merchants and artisans, and they underscore how the operations of the princely court were deeply embedded in the commerce of the era. By probing into court correspondence and ordinances, I trace the careers of Jehan Le Tourneur and other courtiers engaged in the commercial transactions.

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[10] Werner Parvicini, "The Court of the Dukes of Burgundy: A Model for Europe?" in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450-1650.* (Oxford, 1991), 72. He also mentions Le Tourneur as an example of influential non nobles in the court, citing the gratuities he received from the town of Lille. *Ibid*, 84.

[11] Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 141.

This brings into relief how these men often came from urban backgrounds outside the court, and how it was their commercial and fiscal skills that made them indispensable within the court. I argue that beneath the seemingly rigid and relatively immobile structure of a feudal court – whose cultural logic the Burgundian court so brilliantly enacted – lay something quite different: a commercial enterprise.

II.

Although in the company of dignitaries in the form of medallions, Jehan le Tourneur is barely mentioned in the traditional memoirs and chronicles centering on the pompous rituals and festivities that the Burgundian court was so renowned for.[12] In the numerous court rituals and ceremonies such as the chapters of the Order of the Golden Fleece or the Joyous Entries of the duke into Flemish and Brabantine cities, there is no mention of Jehan le Tourneur. In the various public representations of the ducal court, he does not seem to have shared the stage, even if, as we have seen, he survives for posterity in the form of the

[12] The most famous records of the Burgundian court are the *Mémoires d'Olivier de La Marche,* ed. H. Beaune & J. d'Arbaumont, 4 vols, (Paris, 1883-8); the *Oeuvres de Georges Chastellain*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 8 vols, Brussels, 1863-6) and the *Chroniques de Jean Molinet*, ed. G. Doutrepont and O. Jodogne, 3 vols, (Brussels, 1935-7). The latter two were official chronicles commissioned by the Burgundian dukes, whereas the former, as the title notes, was originally a private memoir. However, as Olivier makes clear in his introduction, he was consciously emulating Chastellain, and his memoirs gained semi-official status after the death of Charles the Bold, as evidenced by Molinet's deliberate use of material from the *Mémoires*. The sole mention of Jehan Le Tourneur in these chronicles is in the report of the *pas d'arme* of the Golden Tree in Bruges in 1468. His name appears as one of the participants in the final group combat scene, but this most likely refers to his son, who shared his name. *Mémoires III,* 193.

medal just described. We need to look at other sources to discover his prominence, which will lead us back to the workings behind many of these occasions.

Jehan le Tourneur instead appears most often in the multitude of expenditure transactions that were recorded from the court of Charles the Bold, the accounts of the ducal treasurer (*argentier*).[13] This remarkable set of accounts was the product of the reorganization of the ducal finances by Charles the Bold. In the second year of his reign as duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold issued an ordinance intended to reorganize ducal finances.[14] Dated 8 February 1468, it abolished the former position of the "financier (*trésor de l'épargne*)" and divided its responsibilities between that of the "receiver (*receveur general*)" who was charged to collect revenue, and the "treasurer (*argentier*)," who was charged to make payments. The impetus for the reorganization may have been the impending confrontation with his newly inherited realms, but it is beyond doubt that the long-term goal was keeping precise inventories and rationalizing finances.[15] In this

[13] *Comptes de l'argentier de Charles le Téméraire duc de Bourgogne*. ed. Anke Greve, Émilie Lebailly, Valérie Bessey, Sébastien Hamel, 4 vols, (Paris, 2001-2009). The *argentier* left two copies of his accounts, one for himself and the other for the *Chambre des Comptes* in Lille to be audited. The latter are conserved in the Archives départementales du Nord, while the former have survived in the Algemein Rijksarchief te Brussels. The surviving accounts span four years from 1468 to 1471, though they are not preserved in their entirety, and fragments of later years 1472-77 also exist in the AD Nord.

[14] The ordinances are reproduced in *Comptes I*, 5-15. For an overview of the ordinances, especially in context of other ordinances of the Burgundian dukes, see M. A. Arnould, "Les sources financiers à l'époque moderne" in *Sources de l'histoire des institutions de la Belgique* (Brussels, 1975), 279-317.

[15] On the structure of the budget, especially the distribution of revenues, see M. A. Arnould, "Le premier budget du duc Charles de Bourgogne (1467-1468)" *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'Histoire* 150 (1984): 226-271. *Comptes I,* xv.

new scheme, the ducal treasurer was responsible for dispensing money to pay for diverse activities related to the court.[16]

The novelty and significance of these accounts is that they provide us with details of where and how the increasing revenues of the court were spent. Through a system of receipts (*lettres de recette*) and bills (*quittances*), the ducal treasurer paid officers in charge of the household chambers (*maîtres des Chambres*) and the military arsenals (*receveur de l'artillerie*), and various other expenditures such as wages and pensions (*gages et pensions*), alms to churches and abbeys, and gifts to messengers and ambassadors. [17] Alone, unfortunately, they do not record all the transactions of the ducal court, for there were separate accounts kept for military campaigns, in addition to the various local accounts kept by the provincial councils and the many ducal households scattered around

[16] The person of the *argentier* also reflects the 'professionalization' of finance in the Burgundian court. The first *argentier,* Guilbert de Ruple began his career in 1455 as a clerk to Jan Wielant who was one of the nine secretaries of Philip the Good. He rose through the ranks of officialdom, probably through the patronage of Guillaume Fillastre, and by 1464, he was named the *receveur général de toutes ses finances* under Philip the Good. After restructuring of the ducal finances, he first served as *argentier* and then *receveur général* in 1471 by Charles the Bold. Later on, he held the important post of *trésorier des guerres* and continued on to become the *maître of the Chambre aux deniers de la duchesse*. *Comptes I,* xvi-xvii; Kristof Papin "Guilbert de Ruple: Biografie van een topman uit de bourgondische financiele administratie" in *Handelingen Maatschappij Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde Gent* 53 (1999): 99-123; Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 230.

[17] Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a breakdown of the various expenditures of the court, the staggering total deserves attention. For instance, the total of 365 410 l. for the relatively quiet year of 1469 is about three times the estimate of the yearly expenditure of the joint ducal household under Philip the Good in 1444 (ca. 125 000 to 150 000 l., according to Caron, Clauzel, Rauzier, and Sommé, "La cour des ducs de Bourgogne," in *La Cour comme Institution l'économique,* ed. M. Aymard and M. A. Romani (Paris, 1998), 34-5 and about nine times the average expenditure of the city of Ghent (whose yearly expenditure was approximately 39 600 l. during the 1440s according to Stabel, "For Mutual Benefit," 105). For comparison with private wealth, the court expenditure would amount to approximately 18 times the total capital that the Medici Bank had in Bruges, as the outstanding debt owed by Charles the Bold to the Medici Bank on his death in 1477 (57 000 l.) was reported to be three times the branch's capital.

the domains.[18] The purchase of daily consumables, such as foodstuffs, were also recorded in such household accounts.[19] Still, in regards to measuring the transactions of the court, the accounts of the *argentier* are the most exhaustive and valuable source for historians. As Mario Damen notes, these accounts are the most reliable records of the ducal court's expenses at a central level.[20]

It is within these records of ducal expenditure that we find ample and important records of Jehan Le Tourneur. He appears in over 160 entries, dispersed over the four years in which we have surviving records. The following entry from August 1470 is exemplary in terms of providing us an insight into his importance:

> To Jehan Nyvart, the sum of 2,266 pounds 13 shillings 3 pennies of the said price [*livres* of 40 Flemish *gros*] which is owed to him for a certain amount of golden cloth and silk delivered by him, that follows from the month of May and June, [Fourteen] seventy. First, for thirty two ells and three quarters of lush black damask brocaded with gold, for the price of 19 pounds 4 shillings an ell, that makes 628 pounds 16 shillings … Item, for twenty four ells and a half of crimson velvet on lush satin cover, at the price of 7 pounds 4 shilling an ell, that makes 176 pounds 8 shillings … Item, for ten ells of black taffeta that lined a velour on blue velour long-robe, at the price of 27 shillings an ell, that makes 13 pounds 13 shillings … For these, by the bill with certification of the said Jehan le Tourneur,

[18] For an overview of the surviving fragments, see Werner Paravicini, "L'embarras de richesses: comment rendre accessibles les archives financières de la maison de Bourgogne-Valois dans Academie royale de Belgique" in *Bulletin de la classe des Lettres* 6 (1996): 21-68.

[19] Caron, "La cour des ducs de Bourgogne." 31-45.

[20] Mario Damen, "Gift Exchange at the Court of Charles the Bold," in *In but Not of the Market: Movable Goods in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Economy,* ed. Marc Boone and Martha Howell (Brussels, 2007), 83.

containing the price and delivery of the said amount, this sum of 2,266 pounds 13 shillings 3 pennies.[21]

Here, Jehan le Tourneur appears as the court official in charge of overseeing the purchase and delivery of goods. This particular transaction, which actually spills over a folio and a half, involved an impressive number of luxurious textiles, all worth a lot of money. A dizzying array of fabrics, from the expensive golden cloth (*drap d'or*) to many shades and kinds of velvets, damasks, taffetas, satin was exchanged for a sum that was equivalent to about 30 years income of a master mason.[22] In the accounts, excluding monetary compensations or gifts, there are few transactions related to the purchase of goods that exceed this amount. That Le Tourneur was charged with overseeing such a costly transaction is a measure of the trust accorded him and his importance in the court.

In addition, to certify such a transaction, Le Tourneur must have had a sure command of the variety of fabrics that were in need at the court and also their relevant prices – a command that the modern historian can hardly replicate. His command is evident also in the various goods that he himself sometimes procured for the court. For one instance, in October 1470, he was paid, by his own bill, 102 pounds 1 shilling for a multitude of items including "fifty seven ells of fine cloth (*toilles*) … fifty five ells of another less fine cloth … twenty four ells of another large cloth … ."[23] In the surviving

[21] *Comptes III*, nr. 2311.

[22] Based on indices in John H. Munro, "Builders' Wages in Southern England and the Southern Low Countries, 1346 -1500: A Comparative Study of Trends in and Levels of Real Incomes" in *L'Edilizia prima della rivoluzione industriale, secc. XIII-XVIII,* ed. Simonetta Caviococchi (Florence, 2005), 1053.

[23] *Comptes III*, nr. 2347.

records of court expenditure, Jehan le Tourneur did not merely attend to the person of the duke but appears as the court official responsible for providing the ducal court the fabrics, trimmings, and furnishings of various kinds that dressed and adorned the duke and his entourage.

A closer look at the above and related transactions provides further clues regarding the prominent and precise role that Jehan Le Tourneur performed in the court. The counterpart in this transaction is a certain Jehan Nyvart, a man identified without any title or provenance in this particular transaction. However, in his first entry in the accounts, dated December 1468, he is recorded as a "merchant following the court (*marchant sievant la court*)."[24] He starts to appear more and more frequently in the following months, culminating in the over 2,266 pound transaction we witnessed above. Nyvart specializes solely in the provisioning of cloth, but he supplied a variety of cloth ranging from grey taffetas worth eight shillings per ell to the exotic "very fine Milanese black woolen" worth fifty two shillings per ell (Table 1.)[25] These were typically for the use of the ducal household, whether the Duke himself, his horse, or his pages and valets. He even appears in the role of providing several hundred pounds worth of cloth to provide new robes for a group of visiting dignitaries.[26] Such entries suggest that Jean Nyvart was a major supplier to the court, for fabrics casual and special, small and large.[27]

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[24] *Comptes I*, nr. 1072.

[25] *Comptes I*, nrs. 1401, 1618, 1471 ; *Comptes II*, nr. 155.

[26] *Comptes I*, nrs. 1181, 1447.

[27] In the accounts, Jean Nyvart shares this title and function with only a few other merchants such as Haquinet de Langle, and Jehan de Houppelines. Of these, Haquinet de Langle is the most prominent,

Table 1. The Transactions of Jean Nyvart, 1468-9.

Date	£	s.	Item	Usage	Certification by
Dec. 1468	382	10	125 yards of black velu, 25 yards of black satin	for 6 robes for pages, 5 robes for Jehan de Rochefay, 13 harnesses, 7 doublets for grand pages	Jehan de Rochefay, Stablemaster (premier escuier d'escuierie)
Feb. 1469	219	12	37 ells of very rich black satin, 20 ells of plain black satin	to make robes, doublets, and other clothing	Jehan Le Tourneur, First Steward (premier sommelier)
Mar. 1469		54	3 quarters of black velvet	for a sword cover	Jehan de Rochefay, Stablemaster
Apr. 1469	108		6 ells of black damask, 12 ells of violet camelot	delivered to the wife of Guillaume Rat for a robe, at the request of Jehan de Halewin	Pierre Bladelin, master of the ducal household
May. 1469	184	16	2 pieces of Milanese black woolen	taffetas for the lining of a crimson velvet robe of the Duke	Jehan Le Tourneur, First Steward
	752	16	80 ells of black velvet, 120 ells of black damask, etc	for the 10 knights, 5 esquires, chancellor, and 3 doctors of the Duke of Austria	the said lords
Jun. 1469	13	4	4 ells of very fine velvet	for ducal armour	Jehan de Rochefay, Stablemaster
Jul. 1469	19	12	40 ells of grey taffetas	for lining in a crimson robe that the duke gave to Pierre de Miraumont, his knight	Jehan Le Tourneur, First Steward
Nov. 1469	176	16	2 pieces of very fine Milanese black wool, each 34 ells	to make a hose for the duke	Jehan Le Tourneur, First Steward
	325	8	various cloths: silk, velvet, Camelot, etc	for clothing for various servants of the duke (pages, valets, esquires, etc)	Jehan de Rochefay, Stablemaster

with approximately double the number of transactions compared to Jean Nyvart. The operations and significance of these "merchants following the court" will be treatment in the following chapter.

In the majority of Jean Nyvarts transactions with the court, Jehan Le Tourneur was his counterpart. In his capacity as the First Steward, he was responsible for certifying the transactions with such "merchants following the court." For instance, in May 1468, Le Tourneur certifies 99 pounds 4 shillings for the delivery of various linen draperies by another "merchant following the court" Haquinet de Langle for use at the festive of the Golden Fleece; in July 1469, 13 pounds 16 shillings for fine black draperies provided by Pierre Feron; and in July 1474, 32 pounds 2 shillings for various merchandise from one Goudevard de Coustre, who appears for the first time as another "merchant following the court," and whose goods were destined for the ducal army in Germany.[28] Jehan Le Tourneur was largely responsible for the multitude of transactions that this princely court carried out with such designated merchants. In this sense, Le Tourneur, the First Steward, served as a "middleman" between the commercial world and the court.

This role of Le Tourneur as an intermediary between the court and the market was not confined to the above merchants. He also dealt with many merchants who were not specifically designated as "merchants following the court." For instance, in January 1469, he conducted a transaction with Philippe Bittebloc, "merchant residing in Bruges," for a total of 280 pieces of fur (*seblines*) worth 128 pounds 4 shillings. In March of the same year, he personally received from Jean Claissonne, another "merchant" without further identification, a delivery of 40 sables (*martres sebelines*) worth 240 pounds.[29] Unlike the various wool and silk fabrics which were in constant need at the court, items such as fur

[28] *Comptes I* , nr. 718; *Comptes II*, nrs. 1484, 1488; *Comptes V*, nr. 124.

[29] *Comptes III* , nrs. 2120, 2182.

were a purchased on more rare occasions. Thus, fur transactions were done with merchants who specialized in that commodity and for whom the court was not the main or only customer. Yet, the important fact is that even occasional dealings with independent merchants were also covered by the First Steward. Le Tourneur must have been well acquainted with market transactions indeed.

Tracking these items reveals another important role performed by Le Tourneur. The furs delivered to the court were tailored by Michiel Le Sueur, the ducal furrier (*valet de chambre et furrier*) who, for one example, received 121 pounds 16 shillings in December 1470 for making a wide range of robes for the duke, including "foremost, for the making for the said master [duke Charles], a robe of black velvet furred with sable."[30] Likewise, Jehan Loys, another ducal tailor appears numerous times over the years weaving various textiles into "robes, tunics and mantles," as an entry from August 1469 for the amount of 7 pounds 8 s records.[31] This kind of activity extended further to ordering workmanship by various artisans. Jehan de Bapaulmes, the stocking-maker (*chassetier*), Guillaume Rondel, the cobbler (*cordonnier*) for both shoes and horse-gear, and Gerart Le Ceruier of Brussels (occupation unnamed), for chests, are all named as counterparts in dealings with the First Steward. There is even the surprising mention of a female artisan Jennette La Ligniere, "for making a dozen bedclothes (*draps de litz*), for my said lord, of

[30] *Comptes III* nr. 2389. Though in theory, a *valet de chambre* designated an officer or servant who as "in waiting" at court, in reality it was often an honorary title for preferred artisans who remained in urban centers. Jan van Eyck, *valet de chambre* of Philip the Good is the most famous case. Within the accounts, Jean Marchant, *valet de chambre* and embroider, as well as the ducal painter, Pierre Coustain are also urban artisans who were designated as ducal servants. For an extended discussion of this title system and these figures, see chapter 3 below.

[31] *Comptes II*, nr. 2176.

four broad linen cloth (*de toilles de largue*), each six ells and a half long, at 4 shillings a piece, … for making ten head-coverings (*keuvrechiefz*) at 12 pennies a piece…."[32] These records confirm that Jehan le Tourneur regularly oversaw the work of artisans who, often designated as ducal servants, worked for the court.

Two details in the entries provide further clues as to the nature of these transactions. The payments made to the ducal tailors such as Loys or artisans such as La Ligniere are not sufficient to cover the price of the materials being fashioned.[33] Moreover, in contrast to the descriptions of the delivery of cloth by merchants, which only mention the quantity of each cloth, in these entries we find the addition of the phrase "for the making of (*pour la fachon de*)." Le Tourneur was paying the artisans for the value of the workmanship.[34]

Thus, Jehan le Tourneur had responsibility for both acquiring the raw material needed and assuring that the materials were worked into finished goods for the court. He was the "entrepreneur" in this process, thus not replacing the artisans themselves but organizing their work. Rather than buying from artisans who procured the material themselves and made them according to order, the court itself procured the materials separately from either designated or local merchants, and then directly ordered dedicated

[32] *Comptes I*, nr. 478.

[33] Although we do not have a list of market prices from the fifteenth century (and even then the price would fluctuate according to location and season), by comparing the prices paid to the artisans to the price of fur and of textiles declared within the accounts, it is possible to deduce that the price would be plausible for workmanship alone, excluding the price of the raw material.

[34] See chapter 3 for a fuller discussion of the various artisans employed in this manner and how the court managed this process.

artisans to fashion them into items for use in the court. Jehan le Tourneur was the coordinator and manger of these processes.

The role that Jehan le Tourneur performed in this process was remarkable in several ways. First, he was able to navigate skillfully the market for material, arrange production with artisans, and thereby secure the necessary goods for the court. He must have been well acquainted with the market and its actors: the quality of the materials, the merchants who provided them, the artisans who could work on them, the time and sequence in which such production needed to be organized, and the price that should be paid to each worker and for each of the materials. Secondly, and more remarkably, he was in charge of organizing the various phrases of the production of the material, from procurement to completion. In this regard, Jehan le Tourneur was similar to the famed 'merchant-entrepreneurs' of the proto-industrialization debate.[35] In their effort to circumvent urban guild restrictions and limitations, the merchant-entrepreneurs of early modern Europe divided up and out-sourced the various phrases of production. The goal of Jehan le Tourneur was obviously different, but this comparison does highlight the similar entrepreneurial skills and capital necessary to coordinate such production.

[35] The literature on the proto-industrialization debate is vast, since the publication of Franklin Mendel's seminal piece, "Proto-industrialization: The First Phase of the Industrialization Process," *The Journal of Economic History* 32 (1972), 241-261. For a useful survey see, *European Proto-Industrialization*, ed. S. Ogilvie & M. Cerman (Cambridge, 1996). The debate has often focused on the employment of the rural population for large scale market-oriented production of textiles and whether or not this was a precursor to later industrialization. Within this debate, an important element has been the role of the merchant-entrepreneur who possessed both the capital to procure raw materials and pay wages and the organizational skills to divide the production process and distribute it among different workers, i.e., the "putting-out" system. It is in this light that we can see the entrepreneurial role of courtiers such as Jehan Le Tourneur.

But the significance of the role performed by Jehan le Tourneur goes even deeper. As the personal steward to the duke, he was in charge of all goods that were to be used by the duke and those beholden to him, in daily life as well as in official ceremonies and occasions. As the entries cited above show, the transactions often mentioned the end use of the goods being procured, such as "for my said Lord for his joust in Bruges," "for the chapter of the Golden Fleece," or "to present to the visitors from Germany." In a society where one's social status was invariably linked with one's public representation and where the nobility was defined as much by lifestyle – as by office, landholdings, lineage, or military service – appearance was almost everything. And appearance inevitably meant dress and its adornments.[36] True for everyone with pretentions to rank, this was especially true for the courts of the age and especially true for the Burgundian court, whose renown rested as much on its elegance (and the wealth that enabled it) as on its control of territory. It is thus hard to underestimate the importance of Jehan le Tourneur's role. As manager of the process by which garments were acquired and produced, he was, in effect, the guardian of the court's self-representation.

The princely court, in essence, was an ongoing event or occasion in which power and status were projected through the self-representation of the prince and his entourage.[37]

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[36] *Showing Status: Representation of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages,* ed. Wim Blockmans & Antheun Janse, (Turnhout, 1999), especially Raymond van Uyten, "Showing off One's Rank," 29-34. On the mentality behind such attitudes, Howard Kaminsky, "Estate, Nobility, and the Exhibition of Estate in the Later Middle Ages" *Speculum* 68 (1993): 684-709.

[37] Malcolm Vale, *The Princely Court: Courts and Culture in Medieval Europe, 1270-1380* (Oxford, 2004), 1-33. See also *The Court as a Stage: England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Steven Gunn, and Antheun Janse (Woodbridge, 2006). The case of the Burgundian court is treated in the previous chapter.

The goods that were procured and produced under the direction of Le Tourneur were not merely for domestic consumption within the court but also for public consumption, whether in courtly circles themselves or during the frequent occasions that the court traveled or made formal appearances to the wider public. Though Jehan le Tourneur may not have been a conspicuous participant in these pageants and ceremonies, he was the figure prominently responsible for managing the procurement and production of the necessary material elements that brought those rituals into life.

III.

To perform this task, Jehan le Tourneur had to be both "of" the court and "not of" the court, someone trusted by the duke and intimately familiar with court culture, but simultaneously a skilled merchant who was knowledgeable about finance, market conditions, and, most importantly, production itself. In dealing with both various merchants supplying a dizzying array of textiles as well as numerous artisans producing a variety of material goods for the court he had to have a shrewd understanding of the market. Yet in knowing how to assemble and present material goods for public representation and consumption, he had to have a savvy understanding of court culture. This was a rare combination of skill sets, and the background and career of Le Tourneur, as the historical records allow us to reconstitute in part, demonstrates the training of such personnel.

Jehan Le Tourneur was not of high birth. He was not descended from a noble family that would provide us a record of his birth, nor from prominent circles that would

place him in the court at a tender age as a page.[38] Nor was he from a wealthy urban family, with the means to pull him through the well-tested career path to ducal service and success: from education in law and training in clerkship, to service for the prince as a judicial or financial officer, which would usually lead to a marriage with a noble family, the accumulation of fiefs, and an honorable return to join the patrician ranks of one's home city.[39] Rather, because he first appears regularly in the court records as a servant in the household of the Duchess, Isabelle of Portugal, who resided mainly in Dijon, historians have casually considered him to be native of the Duchy of Burgundy.[40] However, as I show in this section, Le Tourneur's entrance and rise through the Burgundian court cannot be explained without his urban and commercial background and expertise.

The first record of Jehan le Tourneur appears in the partially surviving accounts left by the ducal treasurer in 1431, almost 40 years before the entries in the fiscal accounts of Charles the Bold.[41] He is named "valet of the chamber (*valet de chambre*)" to Anthony,

[38] Noble families sought to place their children as pages in the court, to obtain the necessary cultural refinement as well as the connections necessary to advance in the court. The most famous case is the semi-official chronicler Olivier de la Marche, who entered the court as a page. His father was a petty noble in the Duchy of Burgundy and had died in service of the duke. His uncle had then taken him under his care, and had the necessary connections to place him as page, on the recommendation of none other than Antoine de Croy, the power broker in the court of Philip the Good. Henri Stein, *Olivier de la Marche, historien, poète et diplomate bourguignon* (Brussels, 1888), 17. On how the ranks of the nobility were sustained by co-opting the urban elites into ducal service, see Frederik Buylaert, *Eeuwen van ambitie: De adel in laatmiddeleeuws Vlaanderen* (Brussels, 2010), 185-248.

[39] This career path is well documented in Jan Dumolyn, *Staatsvorming en vorstelijke ambtenaren in het graafschap Vlaanderen, 1419-1477* (Antwerp, 2003) and John Bartier, *Légistes et gens de finances au XVe siècle: les conseillers des ducs de Bourgogne Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire* (Brussels, 1952-1955).

[40] Tourneur, "Jehan de Candida," 404 states Le Tourneur "was born in Burgundy" without further substantiation; Bartier, *Légistes et gens*, 52-53 repeats the assertion.

[41] AD Nord, B. 1942, *Comptes de Jehan Abonnel* (1431).

the newborn son of Isabelle of Portugal, who had wed Duke Philip the Good the year before. It records that he was paid 114 shillings for "a robe of emblems (*une robe de la devise*)."[42] In itself, this single entry does not provide us with any further information regarding his origins or even his prior occupation.[43]

Still, by considering the circumstances of his entry into the court and later records of his career, it is possible to conjecture his background. With the arrival of Isabelle of Portugal in the Burgundian realm, a new retinue was constituted for the duchess. Soon after, following Burgundian customs, the birth of Anthony required the assignment of dedicated servants.[44] Just as the infant Anthony was assigned a servant in charge of food and a chapel clerk, a person to provide clothes and fabrics was also needed. This was the opening that allowed the young Jehan Le Tourneur to enter the court. As the mention of the payment alludes, Le Tourneur's main role would have been providing the necessary clothes and fabrics for the baby, just as the other servants took care of the feeding of his body and the servicing his soul. Like the various other valets that he would later oversee, at this point, he was most likely a petty merchant who was eager to gain a foothold as a supplier to the court.

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[42] AD Nord, B. 1942, fol. 44v. The infant Anthony is the first son of Isabelle of Portugal to Philip the Good of Burgundy, not Anthony, the 'Bastard of Burgundy.' The latter was born in 1421, son of Jehannette de Presles, one of the many mistresses of Philip the Good, and became one of Charles the Bold's closest advisors.

[43] It is possible to suppose that his family name "Le Tourneur" indicated his provenance from Villers-le-Tourner in the Ardennes, or his prior occupation as a turner, but there are no known sources that support the notion.

[44] Monique Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal: Une femme au pouvoir au XVe siècle* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 1998), 53.

Furthermore, Le Tourneur was most likely from the urban milieu of the Low Countries. In 1431, the duchess was travelling through the Low Countries, often in the company of her husband, not residing in Dijon where she would spend her later years.[45] Though the duchess also brought her own servants from Portugal, the newly assigned servants, including Jehan Le Tourneur, were most likely from neighboring areas. In the case of Jehan Le Tourneur, it may have been Valenciennes, for at one point during his long career at the court, Le Tourneur surprisingly seemed to have wished a position outside the court: as the vice-keeper of the mint (*contre-garde de monnaie*) at Valenciennes.[46] Though the office did not materialize, it suggests that he had a particular interest in the town, as ducal servants often sought to leverage their influence at court into lucrative positions in their hometowns. At minimum, it provides further support to the notion that he came from the urban milieu in the Low Countries, rather than from the duchy of Burgundy.

The next record of Jehan Le Tourneur appears in 1433, in the surviving registers of daily payments to ducal officers for their service at the court (*écroe*).[47] This time, his office is recorded as a quartermaster (*fourrier*) in the household of the duchess. Le Tourneur seems to have been retained in court, even after the death of infant Anthony a year after his birth. This also meant that he most likely was present at the birth of Charles

[45] Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal*, 48.

[46] AD Nord, B. 17677, *Lettres reçues et dépêchées*. The letter is a reply from the officers of the *Comptes de Lille*, reviewing the request by Jehan Le Tourneur.

[47] The surviving rolls are compiled and published in Holger Kruse, *Hof, Amt und Gagen. Die täglichen Gagenlisten des burgundischen Hofes (1430-1467) und der erste Hofstaat Karls des Kühnen (1456)* (Bonn, 1997). These records of daily payments are important in discerning who was actually present at the court, in contrast to those who received court titles, but were not necessarily working in the court. For the surviving *écroe* of year 1431, see Ibid, 107.

the Bold the same year, and thus that his relationship to his later lord went back to his infancy. The new position was higher up in the household hierarchy, as it entailed providing not just textiles but also food, lodging, and equipment. It would have given Le Tourneur an opportunity to expand his scope of business, which in turn seems to have allowed him to bring in members of his family into ducal service. His brother Andre appeared as valet to the ladies of Bourbon and Etampes, who were residing in the court of Isabelle from 1446 onwards.[48] By this time, his sister, Jeanne, appeared on the payroll of the household as a "lady of the chamber (*femme de chamber*)," as did his own daughter, Agnes.[49] In the 1450s, there were at least four members of the Le Tourneur family in service of the duchess.

The office of the quartermaster, although a position of higher prestige, conversely revealed the relatively low social status of Jehan Le Tourneur. This can be inferred by looking at two quartermasters who worked with and succeeded him, Jacotin de Croix and Huchon de Biach.[50] Unlike Jehan Le Tourneur, who bore no title next to his name, both de Croix and de Biach retained the title "squire (*escuier*)."[51] Unlike the title of a knight (*chevalier*), which had to be conferred by the prince and recognized by noble peers, in the Burgundian Netherlands of the fifteenth century, the title of a squire could be claimed by those who were recognized as living nobly, even without prior approval by the prince.[52]

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[48] Kruse, *Hof*, 204; Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal*, 74.

[49] Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal*, 272.

[50] Kruse, *Hof*, 207; Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal*, 312.

[51] Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal*, 312.

[52] Frederik Buylaert, "Chivalry, Social Mobility and State Formation in the County of Flanders, 14th - 16th centuries," workshop paper for the Low Countries and Beyond (Columbia, 2011), 19-21; "The

Therefore, urban elites with some prominence often claimed the title for themselves, as is likely the case for de Croix and de Biach. That Le Tourneur could not even claim such a title betrays his origins as a commoner.[53] The background of the Le Tourneur family may be so obscure precisely because he was from relatively humble origins. Le Tourneur's rise is a measure of both the fluidity of offices between the lesser nobility and commoners, and of the influence that Jehan le Tourneur was acquiring in terms of provisioning the court.

The scale of activities and skill required of Le Tourneur, as a court functionary with market expertise, can be witnessed from the special tasks that he was assigned to as a quartermaster. In August 1441, we have a record of an ordinance issued by duke Philip the Good, sending Le Tourneur, together with the comptroller of the Artillery, to the port of Sluis "for him to do the business … of purchasing a building to house the caravels of my duke."[54] These caravels were being built for a grand crusade that was to undertaken by the duke.[55] At this early point, the fleet was comprised of a large carrack (*grand nau*) and two caravels. As the type of ships suggest, they were being built by Portuguese carpenters,

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Late Medieval 'Crisis of the Nobility' Reconsidered: The Case of Flanders," *Journal of Social History* 45 (2012): 1112; Paul De Win, "The Lesser Nobility of the Burgundian Netherlands," in *Gentry and Lesser Nobility in Late Medieval Europe,* ed. Michael Jones (New York, 1986), 95–118. See also Paul Janssens, *L'évolution de la noblesse belge dépuis la fin du Moyen Âge* (Brussels, 1998), 110-23, for a discussion of this social group.

[53] There is a peculiar case registered in the Parlement of Mechelen from 1474, in which a certain Andre Le Tourneur, together with a Jacquemart Thomas, was being contested in court by Jehan de Mailleberg, Lord of Sainte-Maire in the Duchy of Luxembourg. It has not been possible to verify whether this was the same Andre, brother of Jehan, but if so, provides further support to their non-noble status. *Chronologische Lijsten van de Geëxtendeerde Sententiën en Procesbundels (dossiers) berustende in het archief van de Grote Raad van Mechelen, Deel I, 1465-1504* (J.Th.De Smidt & Eg.I.Strubbe. Brussels, 1966).

[54] AD Nord, B. 1927, fol. 108v "*pour illec marchander … d'une masion pour mettre les carvelles de icellui seigneur*."

[55] Jacques Paviot, *La politique navale des ducs de Bourgogne: 1384-1482* (Lille, 1995), 105.

who had been brought to Antwerp for their construction.[56] The construction and deployment of the fleet was a project dear to the duchess, herself being the sister of Henry the Navigator of Portugal, and she was deeply involved in it.[57] This seems to be the reason why Le Tourneur, as quartermaster of the household of the duchess, became involved in these projects.[58] When the court needed to 'do business' ("*marchander*"), Le Tourneur was the courtier to turn to. It speaks for both the trust that Isabelle had in his loyalty as well as his financial acumen.

The latter is further evident in the continuing roles he performed in regards to the fleet. In an ordinance from the year 1441, Le Tourneur is named "comptroller of the receipts (*contrôleur de la recette*)" regarding the fleet, accompanying Pierre de Moroges, the lieutenant-captain of the fleet headed to Dijon.[59] The ducal fleet had returned from an expedition to Rhodes, and was currently in stationed in the port of Villefranche on the Rhône preparing to participate in the crusade of Eugene IV the next year.[60] In this role, his name has been preserved in the fragments of fiscal records from the year 1441-1443, where there is a set of certifications (*lettres d'attestations*) regarding the payment of wages and other expenses regarding the ducal fleet.[61] Though the registers are incomplete, they

[56] Paviot, *La politique navale,* 106-7. On the various types of naval ships used by the Burgundian dukes, see 283-99.

[57] M. Sommé, "Les délégations de pouvoir à la duchesse de Bourgogne," in *Les princes et le pouvoir au moyen âge* (Paris, 1993), 295.

[58] According to Paviot, *La politique navale,* 107, the duchess had already in 1439 sent Guillaum Tenin, her clerk, and Le Tourneur, her quartermaster, to oversee the construction of the ships.

[59] AD Nord, B. 1975, fol. 75v; Paviot, *La politique navales*, 111.

[60] Paviot, *La politique navale*, 108-113.

[61] AD Nord, B. 1976, nr. 58512-20 ; B. 1979, nr. 58701-22.

show that Le Tourneur was in charge of the expenses related to the maintenance of the fleet. For example:

> I, Jehan le Tourneur, quartermaster and valet of the chamber of my great Lady, Madame Duchess of Burgundy and of Brabant, commissioned by my great Lord, my lord the Duke, was present at the payment of wages and expenses (*gaiges et soldes*) such as purchase for subsistence (*achat des vivres*) and other pieces for the rebuilding and repairing of the grand carrack and caravel and for men stationed in them, certify to all … the sum of 738 ducats nine gros one quarter, at the price of 21 gros coins of Provence ducat each, … on the final day of the month of April in the year 1443, at Villefrance. [Signed] J. Le Tourneur[62]

Though the exact details of the expense are unfortunately not recorded, the entry reveals the magnitude of the expenses being overseen by Le Tourneur. It also reveals his ability to work with several different currencies, converting the pounds that would have been released by the ducal treasury into the ducats used in paying the fleet, not to mention his ability to make sure the funds were used properly. The duke and the duchess relied on Le Tourneur to oversee the expenses of a major project of the Burgundian court, which required the skills to interact with the market on short notice in an ad hoc situation.[63]

The next decade of his career appears relatively eventless, but it cumulates in his appointment as a personal steward (*sommelier de corps*) to Charles, then count of Charolais, in 1456.[64] That year, Charles established his own court and promulgated his

[62] AD Nord, B. 1979, nr. 58723, reproduced in Paviot, *Portugal et Bourgogne au XVe siècle* (Braga, 1995), 333-4.

[63] Perhaps in return for his good work, he received a horse worth 34 francs, delivered by Jacot Michiel, in August 1442. AD Nord, B. 1530.

[64] During this time, the écroes record his presence at the court. Kruse, *Hof*, 107.

first surviving household ordinance.[65] Charles was close to his mother Isabelle and the duke's choice of Jehan as one of his two personal stewards must have been based on his appreciation of Le Tourneur's expertise, experience and loyalty in the service of his mother. Given that Le Tourneur had been in the court since Charles's infancy, it is even possible that he was consulted and played a direct role, when Charles was establishing his own court. His elevation also may have been to compensate for the denial of his request to be appointed the vice-keeper of the mint a year earlier.[66] In any case, he was compensated handsomely: the daily payments that survive from the court record that Le Tourneur first received a wage of 12 shillings which was soon increased to 18 shillings in 1457, more than the other personal steward. It was the fourth highest sum given to a courtier, and the highest sum that a courtier without a noble title received.[67]

The elevation of Jehan Le Tourneur to the position of a personal steward is fortunately accompanied by a flurry of surviving records that show the scope and influence of his new function within the court. In 1457, he was paid over 80 pounds for the provision of court feast on St. Laurent's day, and another 54 pounds as reimbursement for various goods he provided for dignitaries who accompanied the countess.[68] In September of the same year, Le Tourneur is present at Antwerp, concluding a transaction of "95 pounds 11 shillings to Karle d'Écosse, a merchant of Florence, for twenty four ells and a

[65] Kruse, *Hof*, 255. His brother Andre also was on the court payroll, though his precise office is unrecorded.

[66] See footnote 45.

[67] Kruse, *Hof*, 208. The highest sums (36s, 27s, and 24s) were given to courtiers with the titles of chamberlains.

[68] AD Nord, B. 3661, fols. 62r, 71r.

half of ornamented black satin of double hair" which was provided as gifts to several courtiers who were all intimate with the duke, including Lord Michault de Changry, Roland Pippe, the treasurer, and Humbert de Plaine, master of his household.[69] He is even paid for providing the court with various equipment such as belts, harnesses, javelins, swords.[70] Together with his past career as a valet, a quartermaster and a comptroller, these fragmented records vividly anticipate the wide scope and variety of transactions that we witnessed Le Tourneur perform from the accounts of the ducal treasurer. When Charles succeeded to the duchy at the death his father in 1467, the nomination of Le Tourneur to the position of the First Steward was a foregone conclusion.

This expanded role of Le Tourneur, as the First Steward – or what we might call the 'chief operations officer' – of the court, comes into better relief when he is compared to his predecessor, Jean Coustain, the First Steward to Duke Philip the Good. In the colorful chronicles of George Chastellain, Coustain is presented as "a brute and rough man, coarse in understanding and dealings, native of Burgundy, young nephew of Humbert Coustain, his uncle, [who was] a good man, [but] none the less poor and of lowly lineage."[71] Chastellain portrays him as a villain whose "pride started to swell beyond measure"

[69] AD Nord, B. 3661, fol. 69v. This event seems to have found its way into the bawdy and humorous *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, as tale number 63. The tale, supposedly told by Montbléru, relays how, during the Antwerp fair, the storyteller cunningly stole three fine shirts from the three lords mentioned in the account, and then wittingly secured their forgiveness. Though it is not mentioned in the tales, according to the accounts, Montbléru was then "a squire of the stable in charge of expenses (*écuyer d'écurie faisant la dépense*)" Kruse, *Hof*, 216. In the tale, Jehan Le Tourneur comes away as the most generous in forgiving Montbléru. For more discussion on the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, see chapter 4.

[70] AD Nord, B. 3661, fol. 76v.

[71] Chastellain, *Oeuvres IV*, 234.

because of his marriage to a wealthy daughter of the mayor of Dijon and his closeness to the duke, and who was executed for plotting to poison Charles, resentful as he was that his wife had been banished from the entourage of Countess Isabelle and fearful of his future loss of favor on the death of Charles's father, Philip.[72] As historians have noted, Coustain was a confidant to Philip the Good, but unlike Le Tourneur, he was also from petty noble family: he could claim the title of squire and had possession of the lordship of Nevilly in Burgundy.[73] What he does not appear to do is take charge of the various commercial and financial dealings with which Le Tourneur was entrusted.[74] This was partially because Philip the Good never sufficiently centralized his court, and thus such an operations officer was unnecessary, but it also reflects how Jean Coustain was reared in the hands of his uncle Humbert, who also already was the First Steward, and whose position he inherited. The recently uncovered scheme of Coustain – to claim for himself, though ducal intervention and against established protocol, the vacant lordship of Lovendegem in

[72] Chastellain, *Oeuvres IV,* 235-8.

[73] Bartier, *Légistes et gens*, 198 follows Chastellain and claims Coustain was not from a noble family and was only ennobled in 1448, citing D'Arbaumont, "Des anoblissements en Bourgogne," in *Nobiliaire historique et Biographique*, n.s., 2 [1866], 164. But as M.-T. Caron, *La noblesse dans le duché de Bourgogne, 1315-1477* (Lille, 1987), 155-60 shows the Coustains were one of the petty noble families from the Duchy of Burgundy that succeeded in turning around their fortunes through ducal service. They were also considered clients in the patronage network of the Croy clan, with whom Charles had strained relations, and whom Charles blamed for his estrangement with his father, Philip the Good.

[74] Records regarding Jean Coustain are accordingly sparse. From the surviving fiscal records during the reign of Philip the Good, Coustain does not generally appear in the role of certifying purchases or conducting transactions. Though there are a few instance, such as an attestation regarding the receipt of silverware from a goldsmith, even in this case, it was certified together with the keeper of the jewel, who is the usual court conduit to goldsmiths. AD Nord, B 3543 (1440). In the records from the 1460s, there are two major records regarding Jean Coustain: an ordinance regarding the confiscation of his goods and fiefdoms (AD Nord, B. 2052) and a receipt of expenses related to the disposing of his estate (AD Nord, B. 2059).

Flanders – better explains the possible tensions behind his execution, but it also exposes how, lacking commercial skills, he only sought to obtain a feudal fiefdom to prepare for his impending dismissal at the death of the aging duke.[75] Le Tourneur was another kind of steward and representative of the new kind of court.

With the ascent of Charles to dukedom in 1467, Le Tourneur was elevated to the position of the First Steward. As the examination of the surviving accounts has revealed, his function extended to that of organizing the provisioning and production of an array of material for the ducal court. This was possible because he had performed such functions before, during his rise through the household of the duchess. Rather than having been a mere assistant to one person throughout his career, as his predecessor Jean Coustain had been, Le Tourneur benefitted from his urban background and from long experience as a valet, quartermaster, and comptroller of the fleet. He had long been procuring the materials needed for production in the court, overseeing production, verifying financial accounts, and assisting in the management and operation of the court.

IV.

Inevitably, however, Jehan Le Tourneur did not act alone. The business of the court was beyond the scope of a single person. As we saw from the ducal accounts in the first section, other officials, such as Jehan de Rochefay, the Stablemaster, were also often

[75] Jonas Braekevelt, "Jean Coustain en de hoge rechtsmacht te Lovendegem en Zomergem: favoritisme, schenkingen en afgunst aan het hof van Filips de Goede," in *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Ouudheidkunde te Gent* 64 (2010): 87-128.

counterparts in transactions with merchants. Just as most trade in the era was organized around the commodities that were being exchanged, the business of the court was often structured around the material needs of the court.[76] We also witnessed how the rise of Le Tourneur also led to members of his family being brought into court as well. Like other businesses of the era, the business of the court was a personal and family affair, and family and marriage relations would be crucial in strengthening its commercial activities.[77] It is through these paths that we can consider the broader organization of court business.

Here, I trace how the business of court was organized. First, by tracking the personal relations and associations of Le Tourneur, we can identify the important nodes in the business of the court. Though it is not possible to trace every aspect of his personal life, Le Tourneur left increasing traces in the records as he rose up the ranks of the court; taken together, they present an intriguing portrait of the intersection of the personal and commercial ties that supported the business of the court. These relations will lead us to consider the structure of the court in new light. Along with the record of market activities in the ducal accounts, they reveal how behind a feudal façade, the operations of the court was run like a business.

Let us first consider the personal relations of Le Tourneur. Jehan was married to Jehanne Perret, who first appears in the accounts of 1470, as "wife of Jehan Le Tourneur" and recipient of an extraordinary sum (*pension*) of 109 pounds 19 shillings.[78] Given Le

[76] For an overview of the organization of trade by the type of goods in late medieval Europe, see Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Merchant in Medieval Europe* (New York, 2002), 228-341.

[77] Edwin S. Hunt & James M. Murray, *A History of Business in Medieval Europe, 1200-1550* (Cambridge, 1999), 55-8.

[78] *Comptes III*, nr. 138.

Tourneur's modest beginnings, it is not surprising that we have no records of their marriage. The reasons that she received this handsome reward are recorded as "in consideration of her good and agreeable services to the grand duchess and to our said lord, and so that she has more tranquil life in her old years and for other reasons and considerations."[79] This implies long service in the household of the duchess Isabelle of Portugal, where Le Tourneur first gained entrance to the court. Unfortunately, it is impossible to learn more about her family.[80] But we may conjecture that Le Tourneur had been married to Jehanne prior to their entry into the court, and unlike many courtiers who were widowed and remarried, they remained married throughout Le Tourneur's rise.

If so, Jehanne was the mother of Agnes, lady of the chamber to the duchess, mentioned above in the daily accounts from the 1440s.[81] In addition to Agnes, Le Tourneur had at least two more daughters and a son. A daughter named Jacqueline is recorded as "lady of the chamber" to countess Isabelle of Bourbon in the marriage invitation of 1457 announcing Jacqueline's betrothal, while the other's existence is suggested by a reference to a certain Jacques Pourcelot, who in 1471 is appointed as a "master of accounts (*maître des comptes)* … at the request of our dear and loyal First Steward Jehan le Tourneur, his father-in-law."[82] Meanwhile a son of Le Tourneur, also

[79] *Comptes III* (1470), nr. 138. "*pour consideracion des bons et aggreables services qu'elle a faiz par cy devant a madame la duchesse la grant et a mondit seigneur et affin qu'elle ait mieulx de quoy vivre en ses anciens jours et pour autres causes et consideracions.*"

[80] Earlier ducal records also mention a "Juliot Perret" in entries were members of the ducal household are provided with livery en mass, who may also be related to Jehanne. *Comptes I* (1468), nr. 1406; *Comptes II* (1469), nr. 1491.

[81] Kruse, *Hof*, 204.

[82] AD Nord, B. 1609, fol. 79. The invitation is reproduced in Werner Paravicini, *Invitations au mariage: pratique social, abus de pouvoir, intérêt de l'État à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne, 1399-*

Jehan, appears as a "valet of the chamber" in the accounts of 1468, with later records occasionally differentiating them as "the elder" and "the younger."[83] A Chrespien Le Tourneur appears as a valet in 1469, but his exact relation to Le Tourneur is uncertain.[84]

What is certain is that the children of Jehan le Tourneur married up the social ladder, and more importantly, their marriages were intertwined with Le Tourneur's duties and business in the court. The wedding invitation mentioned above, sent out in 1457 in the name of Isabelle de Bourbon, Countess of Charolais, the second wife of Charles the Bold, announces the marriage,

> between our very dear and well-beloved Charles de Visen, squire, our valet servant and the elder son of our very dear and beloved Jehan de Visen, counsellor to my great lord and father and his treasurer of Burgundy, on the one hand, and our well-beloved Jacqueline le Tourneur, lady of the chamber of our lady's company and legitimate daughter of our well-beloved personal steward Jehan le Tourneur, on the other hand.[85]

Jean de Visen was considered "noble" in Dijon, and his son Charles was a squire, which as we have seen, put them at a higher rank than Le Tourneur.[86] But more telling is the fact that Jean de Visen was the treasurer (*receveur général*) of the Duchy of Burgundy, exactly

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1489 (Stuttgart, 2001), 103; On Jacques Poucelot, see Jean Mireille, *La Chambre des comptes de Lille, 1477-1667: l'institution et les hommes* (Paris, 1992), 334.

[83] *Comptes I*, nr. 464.

[84] *Comptes II*, nr. 787.

[85] Paravicini, *Invitations*, 103.

[86] Bartier, *Légistes et gens de finances*, 286.

when Le Tourneur, as quartermaster, was sent to oversee expenses of the ducal fleet.[87] Jean de Visen was the funding counterpart of Jehan Le Tourneur. The latter would account for the sums that had been originally collected and dispensed by the former. Interactions between them would have been numerous. For example, in 1445, we find the duchess seeking to buy some fiefs and castles in the Duchy of Burgundy, to which she would later retire.[88] Le Tourneur, as the quartermaster of her household, would have been charged with planning and overseeing the purchases. The necessary funds would have been dispensed by Jean de Visen. In effect, the marriage connected the commercial arm and the financial arm of the court: one decided how the money would be spent and accounted for the dispersals; the other collected the sums to be spent and distributed them.

Jehan's son-in-law by this marriage would be even more firmly tied to the First Steward's official business. Charles de Visen appears in the court records as a "keeper of the personal jewels (*garde de joyux de corps*)" in the court of Charles, then count of Charolais, in 1456.[89] His role was not only to secure the ducal jewels, but also to manage the duke's personal funds.[90] Thus, Charles de Visen would have often been in the position of releasing the very monies Le Tourneur required in his business of buying from merchants and paying valet-artisans. Furthermore, in his capacity as keeper of the jewels,

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[87] Jean de Visen was the *receveur general* between the years 1437 to 1446. This places him firmly in the position when Le Tourneur was overseeing the expenses of the ducal fleet. Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal,* 161-63.

[88] Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 168.

[89] Kruse, *Hof*, 224, 255.

[90] As Olivier de la Marche described in his *Estat de la maison du duc Charles de Bourgoinge, dit le Hardy*, "*garde de joyaulx … sert a garder les deniers de l'espargne du prince.*" La Marche, *Mémoires* IV, 18.

Charles de Visen also was in charge of transactions with silversmiths and embroiderers, similar to the relation that Le Tourneur had with textile merchants and livery artisans.[91] When Count Charles became duke (and inherited the personal funds of his father) and Le Tourneur his First Steward, Charles de Visen was elevated to the "keeper of the minor jewels (*gardes des menuz joyaulx*)" a position that was subordinate to the First Steward in the ducal chamber. Once again, the marriage relations of Le Tourneur were also business relations.

Similarly, sometime in the late 1450s, Agnes Le Tourneur married Jan van Boschuysen (Jean de Boscuse) of Leiden.[92] The Boschhuysens were members of one of the leading families of Leiden, which was also rising through the ranks of the Burgundian court.[93] As a merchant family that had made its fortune in woolens, the move of one branch of the family into ducal service was akin to 'setting up shop' in the princely court.[94] Jan van Boschuysen was appointed alongside Le Tourneur as the other personal steward

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[91] For instance, in June 1469, Charles de Visen pays the ducal goldsmith, Gerard Loyet, 120 l. for the delivery of a diamond rosette. *Comptes II*, nr. 1464. The following chapter will detail further transactions with artisans. On oyet himself, see also H. van der Velden, *The Donor's Image. Gerard Loyet and the votive portraits of Charles the Bold* (Turnhout 2000).

[92] The year of marriage is uncertain, but in the 1458 household ordinance of countess Isabelle of Bourbon, Agnès is recorded as Agnes de Bosschust. AD Nord B. 3375, fol. 1-2v; Sommé, *Isabelle*, 287. Jan van Boschuysen joined the court in at least 1454, first as a valet. Frederik Buylaert, "The 'Van Boschuysen Affair' in Leyden: Conflicts between Elite Networks in Late Medieval Holland," *Francia* 35 (2008), 104. Agnes seems to have passed away a decade or two into the marriage, as Jan van Boschuysen remarried in 1476.

[93] For more details on their rise, Hanno Brand, "Floris en Jan van Boschhuijsen: Leidse edelen aanhet Beierse en Bourgondische hof," *Leidschrift* 15 (2000): 64–99.

[94] As Buylaert notes, the immediate cause of the move was factional strife in Leiden, but the Boschuysen's exploited this opportunity to ingratiate themselves with Charles, then count of Charolais, thereby becoming one of the first urban elites of the county of Holland to join the ranks of Burgundian courtiers. The commercial expertise of the Boschuysen was most likely not lost on Charles or on Jehan Le Tourneur.

when Charles drew up his first court ordinance in 1456. Considering the age difference between him and Le Tourneur and the relatively short time that Van Boschuysen had been at the court, it was evident that the latter was being groomed to succeed the former. Le Tourneur probably saw in the young Jan van Boschuysen, the son of a textile merchant and aspirant for membership in the business of the court, a good match for his daughter and a kindred spirit. In 1474, Jan did succeed Le Tourneur as the First Steward. The marriage alliance between the Le Tourneurs and the Boschuysens reflected both the relationship between a court supplier and purchaser and the custom of bequeathing of one's profession to a family with business relations.

This mesh of personal and professional relations is most pronounced in the case of another of Le Tourneur's in-laws, Garnot Pourcelot, whose son Jacques, as we saw, became a financial officer at the Chamber of Accounts in Lille. Pourcelot was an old colleague from the household of the duchess, and the two men had followed similar tracks to the comital and ducal court. Pourcelot began as an Assistant to the Keeper of the Tapestries (*aide de garde de tapistery*) in 1438, a few years after Le Tourneur entered the court. He was promoted to the Keeper of Tapestries when Charles, as count of Charolais, set up his own court in 1456; he was retained when Charles became duke in 1467. It was not only their careers that were parallel: a careful reading of the ducal accounts shows that the role of the Keeper of the Tapestries was similar to that of the First Steward. Whereas the steward was in charge of textiles that would be used as livery, attire and garments, the keeper was in charge of organizing the procurement and production of all fabrics excluding

attire, as well as the famed mural tapestries of the Burgundian court.[95] Furthermore, Haquient de Langle who was one of the most prominent "merchants following the court" supplying Le Tourneur with various textiles and fabrics, is, in an earlier entry in the accounts, identified as a "factor of Garnot Pourcelot."[96] In short, Jehan le Tourneur was buying material from a merchant who was representing his old colleague and in-law. Finally, Pourcelot, as Keeper of the Tapestries, was attached to the ducal chamber, which was headed by the First Steward, Jehan le Tourneur.

These close familial and professional ties which strengthened Le Tourneur's authority and facilitated his business dealings, were institutionalized in the structure of the court. Charles the Bold issued several ordinances regarding the organization of his court throughout his reign.[97] Though there are discrepancies between the titles and functions in these promulgations and those we see in the surviving accounts, they do provide details regarding the titles of the court officers, the numbers of personnel, and some of their responsibilities. The primary focus of the ordinances, as we saw, was on defining the hierarchy and prestige of each position, but by corroborating them with the evidence of

[95] For instance, in the year 1468, he oversees the purchase of a various fabrics, such as black woolen of Arras (from a Bruges merchant), silk made of linen (often used as substitute for real silk, from a merchant-following-the court), and golden cloth (from a different Bruges merchant), for a total of 560 l. 55 s. *Comptes II*, nrs. 336, 469, 905, 1103, 1104. I owe this understanding of difference between tapestries and liveries to Katherin Wilson, who examined the various tapestries and their suppliers to the court of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless. *Courtly and Urban Tapestries of the Burgundian Dominions, c. 1363-1500* (Brepols, forthcoming). I can also confirm from the ducal accounts that I have reviewed, textiles that were used for liveries and other clothing fell under the responsibility of the First Steward, while textiles that were used for wall hanging tapestries as well as blankets, pillows and other furnishings fell under the responsibility of the Keeper of the Tapestries.

[96] *Comptes, I*, nrs. 469, 621.

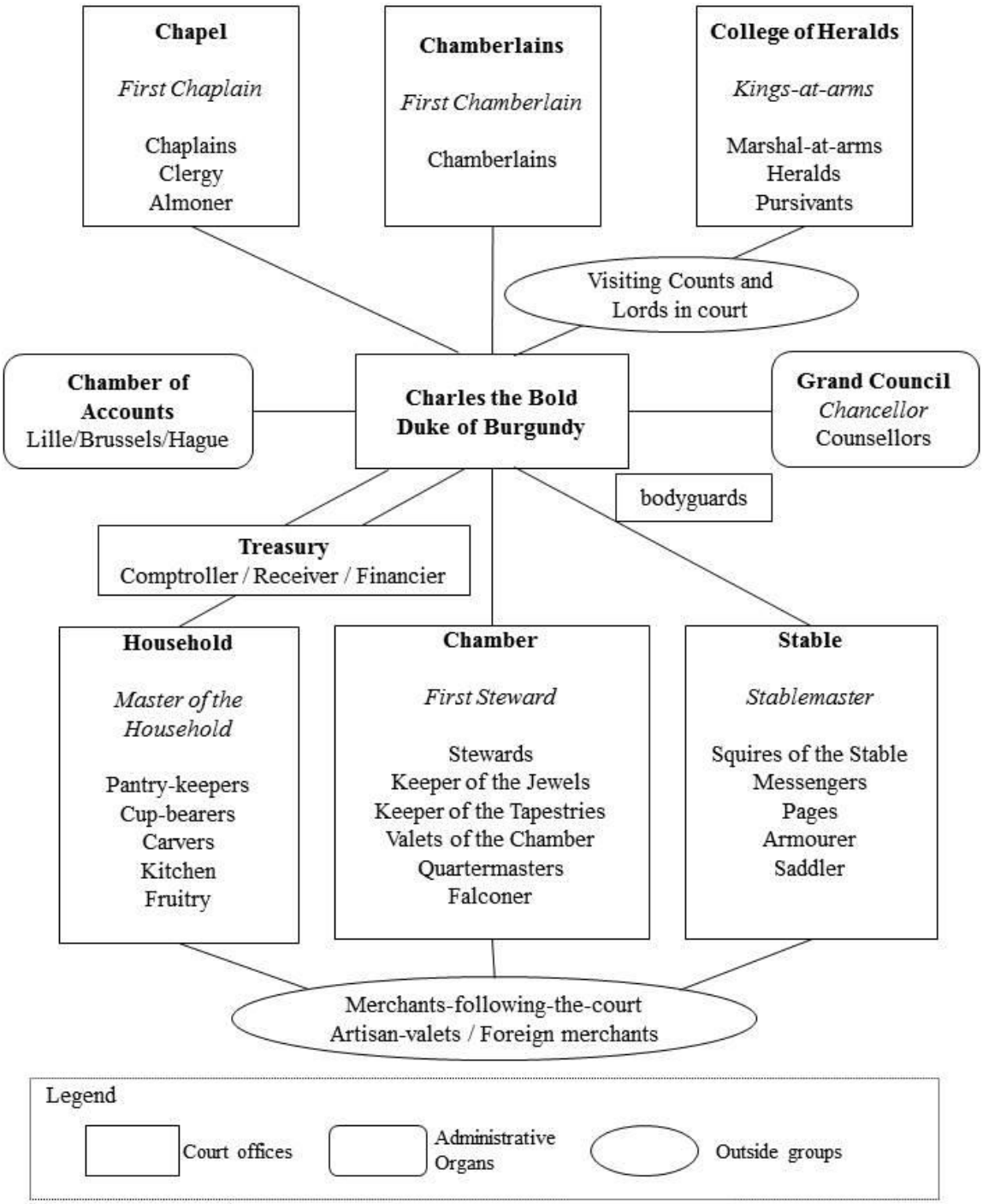
[97] See chapter 1, section II.

transactions in the ducal accounts, it is possible to understand the structure of the court. In the following diagram (Table 2), I have schematically visualized the court structure in terms of its public presentation, its inner operations and the organs of state that were attached to the court and the person of the duke.

The upper half comprising the ducal chapel, chamberlains and college of heralds, together with the resident visiting counts and lords, shows how the court would present itself in public occasions. The duke would be flanked by his chamberlains, chaplains and heralds. The office of the chamberlain was the highest honor for a ducal vassal, since it conferred proximity to the duke. In theory, the chamberlains were attendants to the ducal chamber, but in reality, they served as a kind of guard of honor for the duke. Thus, the office was reserved for high ranking and loyal nobles, and its honorary function is confirmed by the fact that the position was rotated on a semi- annual (and later quarterly) basis to allow as many vassals as possible to enjoy the honor. The college of heralds (*office d'armes*) was led by five kings-at-arms (*roi d'armes*), and comprised of heralds (*hérauts d'armes*). They often performed ceremonial and diplomatic duties for the court, and the positions were likewise reserved for nobles of the realm, those who had not yet risen to the status of chamberlains. The Chapel was the ecclesiastical office within the court which not only accompanied the duke in worship but also was in charge of distributing alms.[98]

[98] The ducal Chapel also seems to have been run as a separate organization within the court. Under the clergy and chaplains, the chapel had its own stewards, quartermasters and other attendants.

Table 2. The Structure of the Burgundian Court, ca. 1469



The lower half, which partially mirrors the above, presents the operations of the court. First, the ducal household, headed by the master of the household, was primarily in charge of the everyday provisioning of the food and wine for the court. The master of the household would be responsible for the bread and wine pantry, as well as the kitchen. This also gave him charge over preparing and performing the banquets and entertainments of the court, making him in a sense a 'master of ceremonies' as well. While the master of the household was a permanent post, some of the lesser offices, such as the pantry-keeper (*pantetier*), cup-bearer (*échansons*), and carver (*écyuer tranchant*), became honorary and rotated. This may be because of the prominent role they took in banquets, which were public affairs, and because often the actual work was done by assistants (*aides*).[99] The master of the household also had his own clerks to keep record of its expenditure, though these only rarely survived.[100]

The stable was the military arm of the court, which was also in charge of messengers and pages. The accounts show that it was in charge of providing for the material needs of the heralds and the ducal bodyguards, including their livery and armor. In this role, especially in peacetime, the Stablemaster, Jean de Rochefay (also named Rosquin), was a major official in charge of procuring various materials needed for the upkeep of the armored personnel of the court. Because of the essential role that ducal guards, mounted messengers, trumpeters and pages played in court ceremonies, the

[99] This structure, absent the numerous honorific pantlers, cup-bearers and carvers, was replicated for separate households for the duchess as well as the residential ducal palaces in the major cities.

[100] The office of the *maître de la chambre aux deniers du duc* was in charge of accounting for the income and expenses of the ducal household.

Stablemaster had a substantial role in dealing with merchants who supplied livery as well as artisans such as saddlers, armorers, and blacksmiths.[101] Rochefay was from a wealthy family in Hesdin (Pas-de-Calais, France), and by the time he first appears in the records, he was already a "squire" and a castellan.[102] In the entry, he is being paid for the "defense" of the château, having purchased arms from a foundry in Saint-Omer. For prosperous urban families, armor was an expensive but lucrative commodity to trade in, as well as necessary possession for them if they sought to enter into the ranks of nobility. Rochefay seems to have come from this upwardly mobile group, and leveraged his expertise in the arms trade to lead the ducal stable.

Yet, the heart of the princely court was the ducal chamber, led by the First Steward, Jehan Le Tourneur. He was in charge of the train of stewards, keepers, quartermasters, and valets – several of whom he had personal and familial relations with – who supplied, produced and managed the material culture of the court. He had married all three of his children to families who shared his commercial expertise and experience in ducal service, and each family came from one of the three regional pillars of Burgundian power: Burgundy, Holland and Flanders.[103] Jehan Le Tourneur was thus not only centrally placed

[101] La Marche's memoire again confirms this role: "*Et pour le tiers point, l'escuier doit ester mixte, car il se mesle de toutes les pompes et des parures qui se font pour le prince*" *Mémoires IV*, 61.

[102] Jean de Rochefay himself appears for the first time, with the above mentioned title and postion in AD Nord, B 2065. "*Mandements de Charles … de deliver à Jean de Rochefay dit Rosquin, chatelaine de Hesdin …* " [1467]; Also, AD Nord, B. 2069 "*Mandements de Charles, … à Jean de Rochefay, dit Rosquin, écuyer* " [1468].

[103] Such tight relations within the court can be identified in upper levels as well, though with different functions and purposes. Hanno Brand, "Appointment Strategies at the Court of Duke Philip the Good: New Applications of Old Mechanisms," *Court as a Stage,* 85-100.

in the court and central to its operations but also combined his personal and familial connections with the institutional set-up of the court.

V.

It has been generally understood that Jehan le Tourneur, as the First Steward "was in charge of all the domestic details concerning the life of his master," thus as a personal servant to the duke, someone who attended to his lord's person.[104] Historians have generally been comfortable with that definition, and although all have understood that to attend the person of the duke implied oversight of his household – and the household's wardrobe – they have not closely examined just what it took to perform that role properly.

The records described here have given us a closer look, and they leave little doubt that "to attend to the duke's person" meant to run the business of the court. Le Tourneur was himself an entrepreneur in the fullest "mercantile" sense of the word, and although he performed that function in the service of a court, he was the court's business arm, not merely the executor of the royal will. He rose in social status precisely because he was a businessman, and his counterparts and partners were likewise men of commerce. By weaving his personal relations into the web of business transactions, he made the court a good business. It was a place where materials of good quality were purchased at good prices, made into garments of good design and workmanship, and used to display the

[104] Bartier, *Légistes et gens*, 49.

splendor and dignity of a court whose self-representation was not just an expression of its power, but its essence.[105]

We can now return to Candida and reason why he thought a medallion of the First Steward was befitting. If the commemorative medallion of Mary was a symbol of Burgundian dynastic aspirations, that of Jean Corondelet a vision of sovereign justice, and that of Jacques Galiot a boast of military prowess, then the medallion of Jehan le Tourneur can be seen as a symbol of the business acumen that made the splendor of Burgundy come into life. To a contemporary insider's eye, the successful workings of a court also rested on the men of business, the Keepers and Stewards of the ducal chamber, and Jehan Le Tourneur was the representative of such 'courtiers-cum-merchants.'

The case of Le Tourneur, and the social group around him, places the men of business at the heart of the princely court. It asks us to consider, whether the court and the market can still be considered oppositional. Even as historians have long understood that princely courts of the age, none less than the Burgundian, were served by many urban elites and to a significant extent financed by the rich cities of this commercialized region, they have nevertheless tended to see the court and the market as separate institutions, with separate logics and separate cultures. So, even as they have acknowledged the interdependence of one on the other, they have preserved the distinction.[106] Yet, as we have seen, from the point of view of business operations, the princely court run by Le

[105] Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, 1996); Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, "Parcours festifs et enjeux de pouvoirs dans les villes des anciens pays-bas bourguigons au XVe siècle," *Histoire Urbaine* 9 (2004), 29-45.

[106] For concise summary see Andrew Brown and Graeme Small, "Introduction," in *Court and civic society in the Burgundian Low Countries c.1420-1520* (Manchester, 2007), 1-35.

Tourneur and his likes raises the question of whether it is dissimilar from a business run by a merchant-entrepreneur in Ghent, a Hansa merchant resident in Bruges, or someone like Francesco di Marco Datini? To seek a tentative answer to this question, it is time to turn towards the urban merchants and artisans who comprised the outer branches of the Le Tourneur's 'business.'

Chapter 3.

Following and Attending the Court:

Urban Merchants and Artisans in Court Business

I.

In the summer of 1469, dignitaries from all the major powers in Europe were gathering at the court of the Burgundian duke, Charles the Bold. Representatives of the King of Aragon, France, Scotland, and England; ambassadors from the Italian city-states of Venice and Milan as well as Naples and the Holy See of Rome; the dukes of Cleves, Guelders and Jülich; even emissaries from Poland and Bohemia were all present at the Burgundian court.[1] Charles the Bold was basking in the glory attained in the years right after he inherited the realm from his father, Philip the Good: he had crushed successive rebellions in Ghent (1467) and Liege (1468), he had successfully forced Louis XI of France to acknowledge his rule over disputed territories though the Treaty of Péronne (1468), he had magnificently cemented a marriage and alliance with the royal house of England (1468), and he had just purchased the land of Upper Alsace through the Treaty of St. Omer (1469), thus coming closer to combining his disparate territories.[2] The eyes of Christendom were

[1] Herman vander Linden, *Itinéraires de Charles, Duc de Bourgogne,Marguerite d'York et Marie de Bourgogne, 1467-1477* (Bruxelles, 1936), 17-18.

[2] Richard Vaughan, *Charles the Bold: the Last Valois Duke of Burgundy* (London, 1973), 1-89.

on Charles, the grand duke of the West, and representatives of European rulers flocked to his court, seeking to divine his next moves, asking for his assistance and favor, even looking up to him as a possible leader against the threat of the Turks on the East.[3]

At this moment of fame, Charles was holding his court at Ghent, in the county of Flanders. With all the ambassadors and dignitaries in attendance, it was a crucial moment in the stagecraft of the Burgundian court, and several feasts and festivities were held in honor of the visitors.[4] The glory attained by Charles in deeds had to be manifested in the splendor and largess of the court he held. The surviving accounts of the ducal treasurer (*argentier*) attest to a flurry of activities related to this gathering. Foremost, the receipts of "special gifts (*dons extraordinaires*)" recorded the sums given to various ambassadors: Alfonso of Ixar from the land of Aragon; the chancellor of the duke of Austria; an unnamed knight and chamberlain of the king of Poland; John Sommerset, an ally of the earl of Warwick; Jehannin Kennessiere, an envoy of the king of England; Thadee de Ghesulphis, messenger of the duke of Milan; and the Spaniards Martin Marines of Salasar and Don Castro of Laredo to name just a few.[5] Smaller gifts were also presented to the

[3] Richard Neville, the earl of Warwick, visited the court of Charles the Bold in April and May, hoping for Charles' help in his fall out with King Edward IV of England, while the emissary of King George of Bohemia arrived at the court in June, seeking an alliance to defend his crown and the Hussite faith. Charles had acquired the lands of Upper Alsace, because Duke Sigmund of Habsburg had visited earlier in May to seek assistance in his struggle against the Swiss cantons and ended up mortgaging his lands to Charles in return for 50,000 Rhenish florins. The English ambassadors were probably present to convey the news that Charles had just been made a Knight of the Garter by Edward IV, though he officially received the adornments in January of the following year. The Pope was supposedly seeking Charles intervention in Italy, as well as against the Turks, while the Milanese feared that Charles was on the side of the Venetians. Vaughn, *Charles the Bold*, 60-1, 86-9, 129-30.

[4] Vander Linden, *Itinéraires de Charles*, 17-18.

[5] *Comptes de l'argentier de Charles le Téméraire, Duc de Bourgogne II*, ed. Anke Greve and Emilie Lebailly (Paris, 2002), nrs. 858, 870, 873, 877, 897, 920, 939.

many petty officers such as trumpeters and heralds welcoming and accompanying the dignitaries, while carpenters were paid to repair a hotel in Saint Omer where the earl of Warwick was to lodge.[6]

Yet, the largest amount of account records are related to the impeccable presentation of the court, that is, the orderly and ostentatious display of the duke, his officers, and his household, with the purpose of "impressing rivals and subjects." [7] In practice, this primarily meant the purchase of textiles, procuring of liveries, presentation of precious metalwork, and preparations for the staging of ceremonies. It required the ability to coordinate and mobilize resources and material from urban merchants and artisans. As we saw in the previous chapter, this was the preserve of the ducal chamber and his stable, and the frenzy of activities that summer are primarily recorded in the sections devoted to "minor pieces (*menues parties*)" and the "stable (*l'ecurie*)" in the treasurer's accounts, each respectively the responsibility of the First Steward and the Stablemaster.[8]

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[6] *Comptes II*, nrs. 901, 904, 922 948, 1445.

[7] To quote Werner Paravicini, who describes it as one of the three major goals of the court, in addition to organizing daily life and securing the safety of the prince. Paravicini, "The Court of the Dukes of Burgundy: A Model for Europe?" in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age*, ed. R.G. Asch & A.M. Birke (Oxford, 1991), 75.

[8] *Comptes II,* nrs. 1182-1211, 1420-76, nrs. 1649-78. Some are also recorded in the "personal expenses of the duke (*dépense de deniers payés en l'acquit de mondit seigneur*)." Originally, the accounts of the *argentier* (which began in 1468) were recorded by month and then subdivided into sections according to the nature of the transactions, such as "voyages and messengers" "gifts and compensations" "extraordinary gages et pensions." But in 1469, the accounts were reorganized around the categories and then subdivided by months. The importance of this difference is that the latter included totals for each category, allowing the *argentier* and the auditor to immediately review how much revenue was spent for which purposes. But the lack of surviving records from the ducal household concerning the provisioning of food, which were kept by the *maître de la chambre aux deniers du duc*, make it difficult to measure the cost regarded to feasting.

In what follows, I analyze the accounts of the ducal treasurer, drawing also on other surviving accounts, correspondence, and municipal records, to understand how the interaction between the court and the market was organized. I argue that, contrary to our casual notions of a favored merchant following the court and providing goods on an ad hoc manner, designated "court merchants (*marchand suivant la cour*)" were stationary agents on the ground in the major commercial nodes of the urban network of the Low Countries. Positioned in major cities, they were conduits for court interaction with the market. Likewise, the artisans who were designated "valets of the chamber (*valet de chambre*)" were not necessarily servants in waiting at the court, nor was this merely an honorary title given to favorites; valets were, rather, often heads of designated workshops in the industrial and commercial heart of the Burgundian Netherlands. Remarkably, the court coordinated the work of these artisans, supplying the basic material, paying them for specific labor, and assembling the parts for the final product. In essence, the court harnessed the urban economy to organize designated merchants to manage its purchases, and mobilized designated artisans to produce its material. Furthermore, these connections with the court provided means for these merchants and artisans to climb the social ladder. Thus, this chapter shows that in navigating the commercialized terrain of the Low Countries, the Burgundian court was an active participant, rather than a passive consumer.

II.

Among the multitude of payment records occasioned by the diplomatic gathering and the subsequent festivities, those to a certain merchant named Hacquinet de Langle stand out. Occasionally mentioned as a "merchant following the court (*marchand sievant la court*)," Langle provides a total of 1345 pounds and 3 shillings worth of textiles in the summer of 1469. The details of these deliveries are covered in 13 entries and span 16 folios.[9] The entries cited below are representative:

> To Hacquinet de Langle, the sum of 93 pounds 4 shillings and 3 pence of the said price [40 Flemish gros], for various pieces of draperies of silk made of linen, delivered by him, at the command of my said lord, iin the month of May [14]69, as follows: first, ten ells of fine black velvet that my said lord gave to Jehan of Sommerset to make a long robe, at the price of 60 s per ell, total 57 L. … [10]

> To him [Hacquinet de Langle], the sum of 49 pounds 12 shillings of the said price, for various pieces delivered by him in the month of May [14]69, as follows: six hides of ox all strapped to make two large blankets to cover the chariots which take through the lands the tapestries of my said lord, at 32 s per hide, making 25 L 12s … [11]

> To him, the sum of 367 pounds 10 shillings of the said price, for pieces of linen drapes delivered by him on the month of July, at the command of my said lord, which is as follows, for three hundred and fifty ells of black and violet draperies, as commanded, which make one hundred robes of liveries of my said lord for the persons declared below: first, to Jehan de Binchs, Martin Floren, [and ninety-eight others] … [12]

[9] *Comptes II*, nrs. 1207, 1215, 1218, 1340, 1462, 1470, 1489-95, 1498.

[10] *Comptes II*, nr. 1462.

[11] *Comptes II*, nr. 1471.

[12] *Comptes II*, nr. 1491.

Together, these samples draw our attention for several reasons. First, they are directly related to the public presentation of the court at this moment. John of Somerset, mentioned in the first quoted entry, was an émigré Lancastrian who was residing in the court of Charles the Bold.[13] The leather hides mentioned in the second entry were used to protect the tapestries which the itinerant court carried around and which were showcased at major occasions of the court. The third entry names one hundred servants of the court who needed to be dressed in newly minted ducal liveries for the gathering of foreign dignitaries. It provides a concrete link to how the mundane activities of Hacquinet de Langle, "a merchant following the court," were tied to the extraordinary sessions of the court. Moreover, each of these entries were respectively certified by the First Steward, the Keeper of the Tapestries, and the Stablemaster. These were the figures in charge of the 'business' of the court.

Second, in providing the material goods necessary for the court, Hacquinet Langle delivered a wide range of materials in quite a large volume. In addition to the "ten elles of fine black velvet," "six hides of oxen," and "three hundred and fifty elles of black and violet draps," mentioned in the above entries, the volume and variety of wares he supplies range from "thirty five ells of white cloth," "seventeen ells of blue camolet," and "nine ells of green taffetas" to "seven ells and a half of grey Rouen draperies," "three ells and a half

[13] M. Brun-Lavainne, "Analyse d'une compte de dépense de la maison du duc, Charles de Bourgogne," *Bulletin de la Commission Historique du Département du Nord* 19 (1865): 203. Though Charles was married to Margaret of York, and called King Edward IV of England "his brother," he also hosted English partisans of the House of Lancaster, such as Jehan de Sommerset and Henry of Holland, duke of Exeter. Vaughan, *Charles*, 61.

of black Luccan damask," and "four ells of Milanese linen," to mention a few. In total, during this summer of 1469, Langle supplied over 1,540 ells, in over forty different varieties, to the court, approximately more than enough to dress a thousand courtiers.[14] Considering the weight of these textiles, in addition to the variety of them, it is likely that Langle had a warehouse for his inventories, but more importantly, he also had contacts and partners to supply him with the many different kinds of textiles that were needed at court. It is difficult to imagine that Langle could have stocked such a large number of wares or swiftly delivered such various items on his own had he actually been traveling with the court. No mere "merchant" literally "following the court" could manage such a large and complex operation.

Third, the ebb and flow in the transactions recorded in the accounts provide further insight into the trade of Hacquinet de Langle. Despite the facts that Langle was designated as a "merchant following the court" and transactions with him appear repeatedly in the accounts, his major transactions were clustered around certain moments. In this year 1469, the summer diplomatic gathering in Ghent caused a deluge of orders to Langle, and his deliveries in June and July alone amount to approximately half the value of all his

[14] According to the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* (www.atilf.fr/dmf/), 1 ell equaled approximately 3 feet and 7 inches, or 1.18 meters. However, according to the ordinances issued by Ghent authorities in 1456, 1 ell of woolen approved for the municipal seal was equal to 0.7 meters. See John Munro, "Medieval Woollens: The Western European Woollen Industries and their Struggles for International Markets, c.1000 – 1500," in *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles 1*, ed. David Jenkins (Cambridge, 2003), 228–324 and table 5.7. In these accounts, the variety of textiles, with their various provenances, make it difficult to calculate their exact weight and volume. Still, if we follow Raymond Van Uytven's estimates on 15 ells needed to complete a whole outfit, including coats, trousers and hats, the deliveries of Hacquinet de Langle in the summer of 1469 would be more than enough to outfit at least 1000 courtiers. R. Van Uyven, "Cloth in Medieval Literature of Western Europe," in *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe*, ed. Negley B. Harte and Kenneth G. Ponting (London, 1983), 151.

transactions with the court that year. Another third of his trade with the court occurred between August and October, when the court was mainly residing in the Northern provinces, in The Hague, Middleburg and Leiden.[15] The remaining major orders were tied to the funeral of the late Lady of Guelders held in the Church of Saint John the Baptist in Ghent.[16] Conversely, in the previous year of 1468, Langle received fewer orders. That year, the court spent the large part of the year in Bruges, hosting the chapter meeting of the Knights of the Golden Fleece and celebrating the marriage of Charles the Bold to Margaret of York, while during the later part of the year, the court was on military campaigns near Péronne (Northern France) and Liège (East of Brabant). The cluster of transactions between the Burgundian court and the designated court merchant Hacquinet de Langle intensified most often when the court was residing in Ghent.

Finally, the accounts also provide a glimpse of the mechanisms behind transactions with the court. In an entry from September 1469, Hacquinet de Langle was paid 98 pounds and 2 shillings "for fifty four ells and a half of reinforced black satin, [that] he delivered in the month of July in [14]69, which made eight doublets for eight pages of my said lord … by the receipt with certification by the said Stablemaster of my said lord containing the price and delivery of the said pieces."[17] Such instances of payments being deferred were most likely transactions based on credit, and happen several times to Langle over the year. This probably speaks to both the level of trust between the court and a

[15] Vander Linden, *Itineraires*, 19-20.

[16] *Comptes II*, nrs. 1207, 1340.

[17] *Comptes II*, nr. 1215.

designated merchant, and the long term nature of their relationship. But the timing of the deliveries and the payments, in the moments when the court was in Ghent and then the Hague (with the household of Duchess Margaret and heir Mary of Burgundy in Ghent), reveal how the commercial links between the court and its merchants spanned space and time. Like the long-distance merchants who had to deal with one another over both geographic and chronological distances, dependent on trust (and a reputation for trustworthiness) to secure their deals, the court also could "buy now and pay later," and taking delivery in one place and making payment in another. The political power of the court gave it the 'credit' it needed to deal on these terms, but it was following procedures born in merchant culture.

In light of the above characteristics, the interactions between the court and its merchant, Hacquinet de Langle, take on a different light. Historians have casually considered the designation "merchant following the court" in its literal sense. As Walter Map already remarked in the twelfth century about the court of Henry I of England, "there was a veritable market following the king wherever he moved his court, so fixed were his journeyings and his welcome stays."[18] The image of a sprawling train of merchants following the court seeking business and favor has retained its hold on our collective imagination, and has not been contested. Yet the transactions of Langle, in their volume and variety, in their ebb and flow, and in their relation to the location of the itinerant court, point to a merchant who was static and established, most likely Ghent.

[18] Cited in C. Warren Hollister, *Henry I* (New Haven, 2001), 215.

A short review of the history of de Langle's "title" will help us understand his role and the changing organization of the court's dealings with the market that his position represented. The designation "merchant following the court" appears for the first time in the Burgundian records in 1468, after Charles the Bold succeeded his father. Though we have multiple but fragmented records of various merchants supplying the court during the time of Philip the Good, there are none that bestow such a designation; the title seems new to the Burgundian court. It seems to be a result of the reforming tendencies Charles, who wished to be remembered as "the hardworking (*le Travaillant*), and spent the first winter of his reign undertaking several administrative, fiscal and military reforms. [19] Unfortunately, we have no surviving ordinance that would explain the use of the novel designation of "merchant following the court." Yet, if we cast our net further, we do find that, like many other aspects of Charles reforms, it seems to be an appropriation of a title found in the French royal court.

The earliest record of the designation "merchant following the court" in French sources that I have found comes from a fragment of the royal accounts of 1458. In that account, a certain "Jehan Lalemant," titled a "merchant following the court," is paid for providing "six ells of blue velvet" among others pieces. [20] The absence of the title in earlier sources suggests that the designation was a relatively recent creation even in the

[19] H. David, "Charles le Travaillant, quatrième et dernier duc Valois de Bourgogne," *Annales de Bourgogne* 39(1967), 5-43, 65-86.

[20] Augustin Jal, *Dictionnaire critique de biographie et d'histoire* (Paris, 1872), 598 cites the accounts of the *argentier* of Charles VII, in an entry about Colart, the jester of Charles VII. Not surprisingly, Hacquinet de Langle also supplies various colorful textiles to the jester of Charles the Bold, Pasquet. *Comptes II*, nr. 1424.

French case, and perhaps a result of the administrative reforms initiated during the reign of Charles VII.[21] But from the 1460s onwards, there are several records of the title in both French and Burgundian sources that show the designation had gained usage.[22] Unlike the Burgundian usage, in the French royal court, the designation "following the court" seems to be have used more broadly, not only for merchants, but also various artisans such as silversmiths, embroidery-makers (*broudeur*), and hatpin-makers (*espinglier*).[23] These surviving cases, however, show that when the designation was first formalized in the fifteenth century, it was more likely a sign of privileged contact with the court, rather than a literal description of their movements.

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[21] They may have been initiated by the legendary merchant of Bourges, Jacques Coeur, who rose to become the *argentier du roi* of Charles VII and is credited with streamlining the French finances and trade. However, Coeur left few sources behind, and it is difficult to ascertain the degree of his influence in these reforms. Michel Mollat, *Jacques Coeur, ou, L'esprit d'entreprise au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1988) provides the most detailed treatment of his life. He emphasizes how, as *argentier*, Jacques Coeur took charge of provisioning all the material goods needed at the French royal court, and in doing so, draw upon royal finances to fund his enterprises. In this sense, Jacques Coeur and his enterprise present an interesting parallel with the court officials and urban merchants and artisans of the Burgundian court. Jacques Heers, *Jacques Coeur: 1400-1456* (Paris, 1997) presents a more critical view, stressing the degree in which Jacques Coeur leveraged royal power to further his private interests at the expense of other competitors. Thus historians have often considered Jacques Coeur as an early example of the collusion of state and market. Jean Favier, *Gold & Spices: The Rise of Commerce in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1998), 181-3, 304-6.

[22] Amans-Alexis Monteil, *Histoire des français des divers états ou Histoire de France au cinq derniers siècles*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1848), 447, 487, 569 reproduces several entries that show the designation in the accounts from the reign of Louis XI (1463-83). Constant Leber, *Collection des meilleurs dissertations, notices et traités particuliers relatifs à l'histoire de France*, vol. 19 (Paris, 1838), 245, also cites the accounts of a Michaelis Dauron, commissioned by Louis XI of France, which also records the title for a textile merchant.

[23] Victor Gay and Henri Stein, *Glossaire archéologique du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance,* vol. 1 (Paris, 1887), 125, 178, 314, 655, 676, 684. The entry from the royal accounts in the year 1455 for a *"Raoulin Delarue, marchand de Paris, suivant la cour"* may be considered an early one, but he is supplying a *"baston d'ivoire"* rather than textiles (*Ibid*, 127). The other cases are also all artisans. This usage of the term "*suivant la cour*" for artisans can also be seen in the court of Anjou. Françoise Piponnier, *Costume et vie sociale: la cour d'Anjou XIVe-XVe siècle* (Paris, 1970), 133. This again contrasts with the Burgundian case, in which the term "*valet de chambre*" was used for such designated artisans. See the following section for a fuller discussion on valet-artisans at the Burgundian court.

The pre-history of this title, and as well as its continued use throughout the Ancien Régime, also support this notion. The French term "merchant following the court" was the most likely taken from the Italians.[24] Since at least the fourteenth century, during the Avignon Papacy, certain Italian merchants had been designated "merchants following the Roman Curia (*mercatores Romanam curiam sequentes*)."[25] In earlier times, the term may literally have referred to itinerant merchants who sought the business of the papal court, which also travelled the Italian peninsula. But already by the late fourteenth century, the designation "merchants following the Roman curia" was the preserve of privileged merchant who were entrusted with the finance of the Papal court.[26] The Medicis of Florence would rise from their ranks, and the close relations between the Apostolic chamber and "the merchants following the Roman curia" would be cemented by the beginning of the fifteenth century.[27] Just as the court was defined by its access to and

[24] I am grateful to Pierre-David Kusman at the Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, Brussels for pointing out to me the Italian precedents.

[25] Yves Renouard, *Les Relations Des Papes d'Avignon et Des Compagnies Commerciales et Bancaires de 1316 à 1378* (Paris, 1941), 125. It seems that it was during this time that the term *mercatores Romanam curiam sequentes* was translated into *marchand suivant la cour de Rome* and appeared in French records, later to be appropriated by the French Royal court.

[26] Melissa Bullard, "Mercatores Florentini Romanam Curiam Sequentes," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (1976): 54. Peter Partner, "Papal Financial Policy in the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation," *Past & Present* 88 (1980): 17–62 provides a detailed review of how Papal finance changed over the turn of the fifteenth century, even as the title "merchant following the Roman curia" remained.

[27] Henri Pirenne, "The Stages in the Social History of Capitalism," *The American Historical Review* 19:3 (April, 1914): 511; Raymond De Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 1397-1494* (Cambridge, 1963), 47-8, 124. De Roover shows how the Roman branch of the Medici bank was the most profitable, but also mentions that the branch agents followed the papal court when it left Rome as well. Felix Gilbert, *Pope, His Banker, and Venice* (Harvard University Press, 1991), 64; Melissa Bullard, *Filippo Strozzi and the Medici: Favor and Finance in Sixteenth century Florence and Rome* (Cambridge, 1980) provides a fascinating account of how the finances of the Medici and the Papacy were intertwined.

intimacy with the prince, the designation "merchants following the court" implied preferred and elevated status.

In the French court, the title "merchant following the court" was in continuous use from the sixteenth century until the end of the Ancien Régime, but it is only in the early eighteenth century that we have an ordinance explaining the privileges and conditions of the title. According to a "Letter Patent" dated October, 1725, the title was given to "privileged merchants and artisans following the court" who were entrusted with furnishing and supplying the court and its dignitaries.[28] They had exclusive access to Versailles and the royal palaces, privileges were bestowed by royal patents that permitted those so designated to use the royal seal. Such merchants were exempt from other guild restrictions and they were under the sole supervision of the Provost of the Royal Household (*Prévôté de l'Hôtel du roi*).[29] They even had the privilege of setting up stands along the entrances of royal offices in Paris, which was a lucrative business.[30] Though the continued preponderance of artisans labeled "merchants following the court" of the late Bourbon France makes the situation somewhat different from that of Valois Burgundy, where the privileges were limited to textile merchants, their quest for exemptions, privileges and the distinction to further their own businesses in Paris parallel the

[28] *Lettres patentes portant confirmation des marchands et artisans privilégiez suivant la Cour …* (Paris, 1725), 273-4. These *lettres patentes* were periodically reissued over the eighteenth century.

[29] *Lettres patentes*, 273-4. The merchants also had the right to appeal to the *Grand Conseil* which had final say over disputes. According to Joël Félix*, Economie et Finances Sous l'Ancien Régime: Guide Du Chercheur, 1523-1789* (Paris, 1994), 172, the records of the Provost provide rich material to research the benefits and powers enjoyed by the privileged merchants and artisans.

[30] Frédéric Garrigues, "Circuits économiques, comptabilité et contrôle administratife: Le cas des trésoriers à la cour de France au XVIIIe siècle," in *La cour comme institution économique*, ed. Maurice Aymard, (Paris, 1998), 171.

Burgundian case: it was the contingent benefits and status as much as the trade with the court that motivated them.

We can now return to Hacquinet de Langle. In reorganizing the finances of the court around the newly established office of the treasurer (*argentier*), the court also sought to restructure its interaction with the market, employing 'best practices' existing in the French and Papal courts. The designation of Hacquinet de Langle as a "merchant following the court" formalized and consolidated this relationship between a favored merchant and the court. But, akin to his Italian and French counterparts, he was no ordinary merchant, just trailing the court, seeking its largess. As we saw above, Langle offered the scale and the variety that was necessary for the court, and because he was established in one of the major commercial nodes of the Flemish-Brabantine urban network, Ghent.[31] It was from this city, in the heart of trade networks that connected the port cities of Bruges and Antwerp to the inland cities of Brussels and Lille, that he ran his operations. Ghent also functioned as a gateway, via Middleburg, to the Northern Provinces of Holland and Zeeland. Thus when the court was residing in Ghent or traveling through the Northern Provinces, Hacquinet de Langle was the merchant responsible for providing the necessary textiles central to the presentation of the court.

How Hacquinet de Langle came to establish himself in Ghent is difficult to discern. Because of his family name "de Langle," it could be inferred that he was originally from

[31] Peter Stabel, *Dwarfs Among Giants: The Flemish Urban Network in the Late Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1997). David Nicholas, Medieval Flanders (London, 1992), 285-95.

the region of Langle (*pasy de Langle*) in the county of Artois.[32] Considering that Hacquinet de Langle could not have received the designation without a previous history of transacting with the court, it is a little surprising that there are no records of him from the surviving earlier accounts. However, there is a record of a "Jaquemart de Langle, draperies merchant, residing in Lille" supplying the court in 1443 and 1444.[33] This may be his father, and it would seem natural that they began trading in Lille, the major commercial city that was closest to the region that gave them their name. Exactly when the Langle family moved to Ghent is uncertain, but by the late 1460s, Hacquinet de Langle appeared frequently as a "merchant following the court" in the accounts of the ducal treasurer, as does a certain Jean de Langle.[34]

This Jean de Langle, who appears to be Hacquinet's brother, provides further evidence of the family's establishment in the city of Ghent, and the nature of its relationship to the court.[35] In the year 1471, the surviving inventories of movables in the ducal residence and castle of Walle in Ghent named "Jean de Langle" as "Warden (*concierge*) of the said residence."[36] In this position, Jean de Langle was in charge of the

[32] The area is approximately the modern day district of Sainte-Marie-Kerque, midway between Calais, Dunkirk and Saint-Omer.

[33] AD Nord, B. 1951 f. 208: *"Jacquemart de Langle, marchant de draps, la somme de vingt-cinq livres"* Also recorded in AD Nord, B. 1929, 1932, 1951.

[34] *Comptes I*. nrs. 1064, 1101, 1233, *Comptes II*, nrs. 1183, 1207, 1218, 1227, 1340; *Comptes I,* nr. 494, *Comptes II*, nr. 1619, *Comptes III*, nr. 2354.

[35] The ducal accounts to not provide any information regarding the relationship between Hacquinet and Jean. The fact that there is no additional phrase verifying them to be father and son, as is customary in the accounts, leads me to believe they were brothers or possibly cousins of the same generation.

[36] AD Nord, B. 3513. "*Inventoire des biens meubles utensils dostel appurtant à mon tresredoubté seigneur Monseigneur le duc de Borugoigne estans à present en hostel et chastel de la Walle en Gand …. en la présencte de Jehan de Langhe, consierge dudit hostel …* " I am grateful to Daniel Lievois, independent scholar in Ghent, for kindly sharing this inventory with me.

provisioning and keeping of the ducal residence in the same city. This is further evidence that the Langle family was firmly established in Ghent. Furthermore, unsurprisingly, the position of the warden conferred commercial benefits, in addition to duty of upkeeping the ducal residence. On the 15th of May, 1473, the ducal council issued an ordinance in which Jean de Langle, as Warden of the ducal residence, is granted the right to keep "eight casks of wine" in the ducal cellar, to sell them to the servants and men of the ducal residence, and be exempted from having to pay municipal tax on sales of wine. [37] The business of the court became good business for the court-merchant.

Finally, and most crucially, both Hacquinet and Jean de Langle were named as "factors (*facteur*)" of Garnot Poucelot, the Keeper of the Tapestries.[38] The Langle brothers were not totally independent merchants who lobbied to become designated merchants of the court or a warden of the ducal residence; rather, they occupied those positions in their capacities as representatives of the court officer. As the Keeper of the Tapestries, Poucelot was in charge of textiles that were used in furnishing the court, from the large scales tapestries adorning the halls to the pieces of cloth used for pillows and furniture.[39] In this role, he was most likely also in charge of furnishing the various ducal residences dispersed

[37] AD Nord, B. 1341. This exemption was recorded and detailed because the city of Ghent had previously requested in a petition to the Grand Council that the duke limit the quantity of wine that Jean de Lange, as the *conierge de l'hôtel*, could sell. Regarding the original petition, see Henri Stein, *Catalogue des actes de Charles le Téméraire, 1467-1477* ed. Sonja Dünnebeil (Sigmaringen, 1999), 393.

[38] *Comptes I*, nrs. 469, 621. On the career and role of Garnot Poucelot, see chapter 2.

[39] Textiles used to dress courtiers, such as gifts of robes for visiting dignitaries and liveries for servants and heralds were managed by the First Steward and the Stable master, while textiles used for furnishing the court such as tapestries and pillows were managed by the Keeper of the Tapestries. Court merchants supplied textiles for both purposes and thus to both offices. See the previous chapter, especially footnote 94.

over the Burgundian realm. For the city of Ghent, it was the Langle brothers who were Poucelot's "factors."[40] The Langle brothers, as a "merchant following the court" and a "warden of the ducal residence," formed the branch of court business that was stationed in the city of Ghent. They were the ducal agents on the ground, attending to the business of the court, in the major urban center of the realm.

The Langle family evidently prospered through the business of the court. In 1478, soon after the death of the Charles the Bold on the battlefield of Nancy, Jean de Langle delivered various pieces of draperies and linen for the officers, soldiers and horses of the court and for furnishing the ducal household in Ghent.[41] Later, in 1485, Hacquinet de Langle was mentioned as one of the officials in charge of receiving the extraordinary taxes levied on Waze in Flanders.[42] Just as the Medici rose to be financiers through their business with the Roman court, Hacquinet seems to have risen from the position of a court merchant to the rank of financial officer. By the turn of the century, the sons of both Hacquient and Jean seem to have attained the highest status, as a certain "Liévin de Lange, son of Jean, guardian of Adrienne de Lange" is named on the rolls of the Flemish nobility in the year 1500.[43]

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[40] We can only conjecture, but it may even have been Pourcelot, also originally from the city of Lille like Jacquemart, who earlier arranged for the Langle family to move their operations from Lille to Ghent.

[41] AD Nord, B. 3377. This was done "*par le commandement et ordonnance de madite demoiselle [Margaret of York] pour en faire et porter le deuil de feu Monseigneur le Duc Charles, que Dieu absolve*." The death of the duke himself did not affect the operations of the court, and commands could be issued in the name of the duchess.

[42] AD Nord, B. 3524. The nature of his appointment is uncertain, as it just records him as one of the three charged with receiving the *aides*.

[43] Ernest Marie Joseph and Hane-Steenhuyse, *La Noblesse de Flandre du Xe au XVIIe siècle d'après des documents authentiques* (Brussels, 1863), 139.

Other "merchants following the court" provide similar life stories. After Hacquinet de Langle, Jean Nyvart was the merchant with the largest number of orders in the accounts of the treasurer that survive between 1468 and 1471. As we previously saw, he first appeared as a "merchant following the court" in the account of December, 1468, and appeared regularly afterwards. He seems to be the ducal agent for the city of Bruges. It is easier to identify the origin of Nyvart than it was for the Langle brothers, for in the years leading up to his appointment as a court-merchant and after the demise of the court of Charles the Bold, he is recorded as a "merchant in Bruges." In the neatly preserved accounts of expenditures recorded by Jacques de Bourbon for the year 1463, Jean Nyvart appears as a "merchant in Bruges," receiving 14 pounds and 19 shillings for the delivery of draperies of silk.[44] Likewise, a later bundle of receipts surviving from the year 1482 includes one from "Jean Nyvart, merchant residing in Bruges," who was belatedly paid for the textiles he had provided for the funeral of the late duke of Burgundy.[45]

Jean Nyvart's transactions from the treasurer's accounts also confirm that Bruges was his center of operations. In May 1469, Nyvart won a major order, for the sum of 752 pounds and 16 shillings, to deliver robes to the knights and courtiers of the duke of Austria.[46] They had just arrived at Damme, the seaport of Bruges.[47] In August 1470, Nyvart is paid the staggering sum of 2,266 pounds and 13 shillings for deliveries he made in the

[44] AD Nord, B. 3662, fol. 7r.

[45] AD Nord, B. 2128.

[46] *Comptes II*, nr. 1447.

[47] Vander Linden, *Itineraire*, 17.

months of May and June.[48] Recorded over three folios, these include luxury textiles such as "violet damask broidered with very rich gold [threads]," "crimson velvet over very rich satin," and "very rich velvet over velvet," all to make various robes, mantles and other clothing for the duke. During this time, the court set off from Bruges, travelled through Sluis and Middelburg-in-Flanders, and returned to Bruges.[49] Several smaller transactions, such as the 100 pounds worth of "very fine velvet" delivered in March 1469 to "Pierre Bladelin, lord of Middelburg-in-Flanders," were deliveries to courtiers who were either residing in Bruges or in its vicinity.[50]

More interestingly, in the surviving roll of August 1471, Jean Nyvart is titled "merchant of silk draperies following the court."[51] Nyvart is again named a "merchant of silk draperies" in a receipt from 1476, in which he delivered pieces of silk, linen and fur to Adolf of Guelders, who was then a prisoner of the duke, held in the castle of Courtrai.[52]

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[48] *Comptes III*, nr. 2311.

[49] Vander Linden, *Itineraire*, 23-24. Middleburg-in-Flanders was a newly erected town on the outskirts of Bruges. The town was built by Pieter Bladelin, *conseilluer et maître d'hôtel du duc*, on a fief that he had been recently granted by Philip the Good, made up of property that Bladelin had created by purchasing land adjunct to his castle. The visit by Charles the Bold and Margaret of York was considered a major honor bestowed on Bladelin, who would go on to become the treasurer of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Jelle Haemers, Jan Dumolyn, and Wim De Clercq, "'Vivre Noblement': Material Culture and Elite Identity in Late Medieval Flanders - the case of Pieter Bladelin and William Hugonet," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38 (2007): 1–31.

[50] *Comptes III*, nrs. 2176, 2186: to Phelippe Pot, lord of la Roche, 2297: to the duke of Sommerset. There is one discrepancy I have not yet been able to account for. The remaining quarter of his transactions cluster around the periods when the court was residing in Hesdin, in the county of Artois. I conjecture that Hesdin may have been Nyvart's secondary locale of operations, probably through a factor of his own, but I have not been able to find any records to support this.

[51] *Comptes IV*, nr. II-155. Vol. IV of the *Comptes de l'argentier* are compilations of various fragments of ducal accounts between the year 1471 and 1475 that have been preserved. They include accounts from the month of June, 1471(I); August 1471(II); October 1471(III); May 1472(IV); July 1474(IV); August 1474(V); a brief of 1474(VI) recording only the recipient and the sums, without any details regarding the transactions; August 1475(VII); and August 1476(VIII).

[52] AD Nord B. 2111.

The additional title of "of silk draperies (de draps de soye)" may reflect efforts by the Burgundian court to further designate and establish a hierarchy among the various merchants supplying the court. His operational base in Bruges would have positioned him perfectly to acquire and trade various luxury textiles.[53] Jean Nyvart was the ducal agent in Bruges, supplying the court, its dignitaries and officers with the luxury textiles acquired from this international emporium.

Yet the operations of the court in Bruges seem to have been slightly different those in Ghent. Compared to what was described about the Langle family, it is more difficult to detail Nyvart's relationship with the ducal officers or the city of Bruges. In case of the ducal residence in Bruges, the Warden was a certain Etienne Michiel, whose family seems to have been well integrated into the ducal household and the city.[54] His father, after whom he was named, was one of the Keepers of the Robe to Philip the Good, while another Charles Michiel is named as the greengrocer (fruitier) of the ducal residence in Bruges.[55] A Pierre Michiel also appears first as a grocer (espicier) in Bruges, and later as a ducal valet (valet de chambre).[56] Considering that Bruges was the gateway for exotic spices and other luxuries imported by Italian merchants, it seems that the operations of the court in Bruges were split between textiles delivered by Nyvart, and spices and other provisions managed by the Michiels.[57] It seems that the logic of ducal operations was

[53] James M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism, 1280-1390* (Cambridge, 2005), 216-99.

[54] *Comptes III*, nr. 1608.

[55] *Comptes I*, nrs. 399, 627, 893, *III*, nr. 1190.

[56] *Comptes II*, nrs. 867, 1430, *III,* nrs. 2322, 2336.

[57] For the role of the Michiels, see the following section III.

different in Ghent, which was foremost an industrial city, and Bruges, which was an international emporium.

A similar situation can be seen in Lille, the base of a third major court-merchant, Jehan de Houppelines. Houppelines first appears as a "merchant of draperies following the court" in a receipt only in 1472.[58] After this designation, his transactions with the court seem to have picked up, as he has multiple dealings in the partially surviving records of August 1474, totaling a little over 2,961 pounds for one month.[59] Naturally, even before he was designated an agent of the court, he had sporadic dealings with the court, and fortunately, these records reveal his origin. In 1468, the first year of the accounts of the ducal treasurer, Jehan de Houppelines is recorded as "merchant residing in Lille" and receives the substantial sum of 1,793 pounds and 10 shillings for "purchasing and provisioning several golden cloths, silks and linen."[60] He also receives 127 pounds and 4 shillings for the delivery of a "horse with a gray coat" to the lord of Crèvecoeur.[61] Both these transactions attest to the scale and quality of his operations, and would have supported his designation as a court-merchant. Because he is a late comer to the ranks of court-merchants, when the ducal accounts no longer survive in whole for each year, we do not have detailed records of his transactions with the court. But the fragments from these

[58] AD Nord, B. 2092.

[59] *Comptes IV*, nrs. VI-94, 110, VII-24, 32, 36, 121, 237, 247, 249, 387, 591. Because this is just a brief, it unfortunately leaves no details regarding what was delivered, for what purpose, and with which court officer.

[60] *Comptes I,* nr. 2282.

[61] *Comptes I*. nr. 413

later years all point to a merchant residing in Lille, supplying the court (often the soldiers tied to the stable) with textiles.[62]

As in the case of Jean Nyvart in Bruges, we have little record of the Houppelines family, other than the mention of his father of the same name.[63] The ducal residence in Lille was serviced by the members of the Pontchastel family, first Alain and then later Jean.[64] Both were also named as ducal valets and grocers, while a Michielet Pontchastel appears as an aide to Pierre Michiel, a member of the family in charge of the ducal residence in Bruges.[65] Like Bruges, Lille also seems to have had an operation where different families were respectively in charge of supplying textiles for the court and provisioning the ducal residence. Jehan de Houppelines, who started as a merchant in Lille, became the ducal agent, the "merchant following the court," in the city.

The remaining few cases of "merchants following the court" clarify this picture further. In the ducal accounts, Jehan and Pierre Feron appear as "merchants following the court." Yet the number of their transactions for the years 1468-71 is meager, barely seven

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[62] *Comptes IV*, nr. VII-59I is noteworthy, for Houppelines receives a lump sum of 2,000 l. for "pieces of the previous year."

[63] AD Nord B. 2102. Here the son is paid for a delivery made by his father. It seems that the son was the first successful trader in his family. Additional circumstantial evidence for their recent rise is the family name "Houppelines" which probably means they were from the village of Houplines, on the outskirts of Lille. Thus they probably only recently established themselves in the city of Lille.

[64] AD Nord, B. 3538.

[65] *Comptes I*, nr. 719, *Comptes III* nr. 1647, *Comptes II*, nr. 1430. In 1470, Alain de Ponchastel receives 32 pounds in lieu of 4 marks of silver for the baptismal of the child of his daughter. In the ducal accounts, payments to commemorate baptismal had been standardized in monetary sums, with 7 pounds 4 shillings as the base amount for court servants such as *chantons, charpentiers, croniquers*. The sum of 32 pounds places Alain de Ponchastel right below the *chevaliers, conseillers,* and *chambellan* who would receive 50-72 pounds. It is a measure of his importance, despite his minor office.

entries in the surviving records, totaling a little under 840 pounds.[66] It seems that the Ferons were not major suppliers to the court at this stage.[67] A certain "Loyquin Huguet" is also mentioned as a "merchant following the court," but within a year, his title changes to "peddler following the court (*mercier sievant la court*)."[68] Huguet only sells one item, "hats (*chappeaulx*)," and his transactions occur once every three months or so, for the same sum of 10 pounds and 17 shillings. Huguet seems to be in the mold of the traditional peddler, trailing the court, carrying an inventory of only one kind of item, selling periodically to the court, but probably more often to individual courtiers.[69] This is further confirmed by the other uses of the term "peddler following the court." In the accounts, sections on gifts and alms sometimes record small payments to "poor peddlers following the court." Yvonnet Dade, a "petty peddler, native of Brittany, following the court" receives 42 shillings "to help him live and sustain." [70] An unnamed "poor peddler

[66] *Comptes* I, nr. 707, II, nr. 1484, III, nrs. 1895, 1920, 2271, 2325, IV, nr.II-166.

[67] Later, in 1474, Pierre Feron is elevated to "merchant of draperies following the court," the same level as Nyvart and Houppelines, and receives his largest order of 356 pounds 9 shillings and 6 pence to deliver various linen to make robes for the officers of the ducal household. *Comptes* IV, nr. II-166. But the lack of records thereafter makes it difficult to ascertain his role. From the fragmented records, it seems that Jehan and Pierre Feron began as artisans in service of the duke, and later expanded into retailing for the duke. In the court ordinance of 1458, regarding the organization of the ducal household of the duchess, Isabel of Portugal, Jehan Feron is named as a ducal valet and a tailor of robes. Holger Kruse, *Die Hofordnungen der Herzöge von Burgund* 1 *Herzog Philipp der Gute 1407-1467* (Ostfildern, 2005), 362. According to Daniel Lievois (personal communication), who is preparing an inventory of the Feron family house in Ghent, they are probably the same family who were originally from Valenciennes but settled in Ghent at the turn of the sixteenth century, and became lords of Sint-Denijs-Westrem near Ghent.

[68] *Comptes II,* nrs. 1176, 1200 and *Comptes III*, nrs. 1856, 1875, 1891, 1905, 1927.

[69] Goudevart de Coustre is also mentioned as a "merchier suivant la cour" in 1474.

[70] *Compte*s *III*, 1591. "*Yvonnet Dade, petit merchier natif de Bretaigne sievant la court … pour luy aidier a vivre et a entretenir*"

following the court" is given 6 pounds 6 shillings for the birth of his son.[71] This shows that not all merchants supplying the court were alike, and the Burgundian court began to designate them differently. The men in one group were agents of the court, responsible for major transactions, receiving honor akin to more noble courtiers. Another group of men were part of the lower strata of society, trailing the court for business, seeking its favor in the form of charity.[72]

We can now see how the court of the Burgundian dukes organized its business over the economically vibrant greater Low Countries. In reorganizing its finances, the court also designated certain figures as "merchants following the court." This designation was not so much a literal description as a privileged status. These men were agents of the ducal court, stationed in the major urban nodes of the realm, and entrusted with supplying the court and its visiting dignitaries whenever needed. The Langle brothers were the ducal representatives in Ghent, from which they acquired and supplied the court with numerous various types of textiles, especially for major court occasions in the city. Jean Nyvart was the ducal agent in Bruges, supplying luxury cloth to the many court visitors coming to this bustling entrepôt, while Jehan de Houppelines was his equivalent in Lille, entrusted with the delivery of various liveries to the court. The ties to the court could be direct and tight, as were those of the Langle brothers, who were also factors of Garnot Poucelot, the Keeper of the Tapisteries. Or they could be looser, as were those of Jehan de Houppelines, who

[71] *Comptes II,* nr. 1080.

[72] Already, in the late fifteenth century, large scale merchants and small scale peddlers were not deemed to be in the same category of 'merchants.' Their differing status is reflected in the different constructions of their honor. See chapter 4 section 4 for a discussion using literary sources.

seems to have been selected from the ranks of suppliers in Lille for this privileged status. In formalizing their roles with a title evocative of earlier days when merchants trailed the court, they had become a new kind of merchant, the ducal agent on the ground. They were merchants 'following' the business of the court by being embedded in the commercialized urban terrain of the realm.

III.

There was another side to the business of the court, for materials had not only to be acquired, they had to be fashioned into wearable costumes, worked into elaborate decorations, rendered practical for use in ducal residences. Court rituals and ceremonies, as elaborately staged and choreographed occasions, required a whole set of artifacts, ranging from dazzling precious metalwork to eye-catching banners and coats-of-arms that functioned as backdrops, especially in the presence of foreign dignitaries. The officers of the ducal chamber in charge of managing these operations needed to employ a range of artisans to craft the artifacts needed and in some cases to procure/supply the raw materials or equipment. Thus, the court had to harness their production skills in order to realize court life.

The main mechanism for tying urban artisans to the ducal court was to designate them as "valets of the chamber of my lord the duke of Burgundy (*valet de chambre de monseigneur le duc de Bourgogne*)." The title "valet of the chamber" has an uneven

history, and historians do not have a consensus on what exactly it entailed.[73] Like many other court titles, the usage of which span half a millennia, the main confusion arises from the fact that this same title was used in different ways in different places, and depending on the time and place it could be used interchangeably with other similar titles such as chamberlain (*chamberllan*) or secretary (*secretaire*).[74] Fortunately, unlike in the case of the designation "merchant following the court," art historians have documented how the title "valet of the chamber" was bestowed on artisans, often considering it as a mark of their elevated status, in their gradual transformation into the modern artist.[75] The artisan who was a valet of the chamber is seen as the late medieval precursor to the Baroque court artist, with the designation part of a court patronage system that provided both financial benefits and social standing that ultimately unleashed their creative energies.

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[73] See, for instance, the back-and-forth between Reginald Blomfield and Lionel Cust, "Valet de Chambre," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 21 (1912): 55.

[74] For cases in late fifteenth century, which I am most aware of, at the court of Guelders, the goldsmith Goessen was titled "chamberlain," which would be equivalent of a "valet de chambre" in the Burgundian court, whereas at the court of Louis XI of France, Jean de Montespedon was "valet de chambre" who signed all the letters of his lord in his name, which was the role of the "secretaire" in the Burgundian court. Nijsten, *In the Shadow of Burgundy: The Court of Guelders in the Late Middle Ages*, trans. Tanis Guest (Cambridge, 2004) 383; *Oeuvres de Georges Chastellain III*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels, 1864), 214. For the French court, Francis I resolved some confusion by creating the title "gentilshommes de la chambre" exclusively for nobles in service of the king, and using the title "valet de chambre" to honor artists, scholars and other commoners. Robert Jean Knecht, T*he French Renaissance Court, 1483-1589* (New Haven, 2008), 35.

[75] The seminal work is Martin Warnke, *The Court Artist: On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist* (Cambridge, 1993), 5-9, 114-8. "The earliest means that was employed to distinguish the artist from other court servants was the conferment of the title of *familiaris* or *valet de chambre*." (114) Warnke's argument is based mainly on the how Renaissance Italian courts became venues for artisans to break away from anonymous craftsman and transform into self-conscious artists. More recent studies, such as those gathered in *Artists at Court: Image-making and Identity, 1300-1550,* ed. Stephen J. Campbell (Chicago, 2004), challenge and nuance this view.

In the case of the Burgundian Netherlands, the first Valois duke, Philip the Bold, named various artisans "valets of the chamber." Painters such as Jehan de Beaumetz and sculptors such as Jehan de Marville were given that title.[76] In this practice, Philip was following the tradition set by his father John the Good and brother Charles V of France, and he was participating in a common competition among the peers of the kingdom. [77] Their practices were followed by his heirs, John the Fearless and Philip the Good, and the latter's patronage of Jan Van Eyck is often mentioned as the most famous case of a brilliant artisan appreciated for his artistic skill and appointed as a "valet of the chamber."[78] Yet, more recent works have challenged this view. As Sherry Lindquist has astutely shown for the case of the sculptor Claus Sluter, valet of the chamber of Philip the Bold, the title was likely bestowed on artisans known for their trustworthiness as administrators rather than their talents as artists.[79] Likewise, Katherine Wilson has shown how several tapestry-makers (*tapissier*) who received the title "valet of the chamber" were upwardly mobile retail merchants invested in a variety of trades.[80] These findings lead us

[76] Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Bold: The Formation of the Burgundian State* (London, 1962), 203-5.

[77] On the patronage of Philip the Bold, see also Patrick M. de Winter, "Art from the Duchy of Burgundy," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 74:10 (1987): 406–449.

[78] Yet, as is also often noted, unlike several other ducal painters, we have no surviving record of work commission by Philip the Good and made by Jan van Eyck. From what we know, Van Eyck was most useful to the duke as a member of the ducal delegate sent to Portugal to negotiate the marriage of duke. On the patronage by Philip the Good in general, and his use of tapestries in particular, see Jeffrey Chipps Smith, "The artistic patronage of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1419-1467)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1979).

[79] Sherry C. M. Lindquist, "The Will of a Princely Patron" and Artists at the Burgundian Court," in *Artists at Court,* 46-56.

[80] Katherine Wilson, "Paris, Arras et la cour: les tapissiers de Philippe le Hardi et Jean sans Peur, ducs de Bourgogne," *Revue du Nord* 93 (2011), 11-31.

to reconsider the role and function of the artisans who were designated valets of the chamber.

Here, I reconstruct from the ducal accounts the work and careers of various artisans who were designated "valets of the chamber," relying primarily on the kind of payments they received and the details recorded in those payments. My analysis provides a different perspective on what it meant to be a valet of the chamber of the duke, a window into why the court designated certain persons, including artisans, as valets, and a clearer understanding of how the court managed its relations with these individuals. At least 39 persons are designated "valet of the chamber" in the ducal accounts from the first four years of Charles the Bold. By following the trail of payments, we can categorize them into four groups.

First, there were ducal servants named "valet of the chamber" without any additional description, such as Collin Villocquart, Jehan Cauwet, and Jehan de Callevielle.[81] The amounts paid them appear very rarely, only incidentally in entries regarding payments to other courtiers and figures, such as for delivering a letter or attending a baptism.[82] The men were probably on the daily payroll (*écroe*) of the court (though these were kept separately and have unfortunately not survived; the lack of other records of payment for their activities seems to suggest they served in the traditional role of manservants, parallel to the ladies-in-waiting (*femmes de la chambre*) at the court of the

[81] The use of the term "valet" in these cases is also similar to the various other "valets" of the stable, of the kitchen, of quartermaster in the ducal household.

[82] *Comptes II*, nrs. 461, 883, *III*, nr. 136, *IV,* nr. II-132.

duchess.[83] They were basically valets of the chamber true to the original meaning in royal households, very much like their final reincarnation in the nineteenth century as servants (*domestiques*) in aristocratic households.[84]

The next group of valets of the chamber were court servants or entertainers who were retained by the duke for the services they provided, which were described in their titles: barbers (*barbier*) such as Baudechon de Cuppere and Henry de Vers, singers (*chantre*) such as Heyne de Ghizeghem and Adriaen Basin, and the cannon-manager (*canonnier*) Bertram de Samman. Though the sums these men received varied from just 8 pounds up to 219 pounds, they all received payments that in the accounts fall under the rubrics "other wages or pensions (*autre gages et pensions*)" or "extraordinary gifts and compensations (*dons et recompensacion extraordinaire*)." Like manservants, they were always in attendance at court, but only appear in the ducal treasurer's accounts when they receive extra wages calculated according to the number of days in service, or special gifts such as money to buy a new robe and doublet. These payments function as a kind of retention fee or 'bonus' for extraordinary service, beyond the daily wages set by the court hierarchy. These figures were providers of specialized services, who were incorporated into the court as valets of the chamber, but occasionally needed to be rewarded further.

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[83] On the role of *femme de chambre* and other females in attendance at the Burgundian Court, see Monique Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal, Duchesse de Bourgogne: Une Femme Au Pouvoir Au XVe Siècle* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 1998), 261-84.

[84] On the original use of the term, see Malcom Vale, *The Princely Court*, 61. Vale cites one of the earliest known court ordinances, the *Leges Palatinae* (1337) of James II, King of Majorca, noting how it stipulates the role of the *cameriers*, which he translates as valets of the chamber, as manservants. For nineteenth century usage as a *domestique*, see Elizabeth C. Macknight, "A 'Theatre of Rule'? Domestic Service in Aristocratic Households Under the Third Republic," *French History* 22:3 (2008): 316–336.

The third group is court functionaries who were attached to the ducal chamber and often mentioned with their titles that described their specific duties. Court officers such as Garnot Poucelot, the Keeper of the Tapestries, Jacques de Bregilles, the Keeper of the Jewels (*garde des joyaulx*), and Jehan Mesdach, aide to the quartermaster (*aide du fourrieur*) were all occasionally described in the accounts as "valets of the chamber and [respective title]."[85] They appear in the accounts, both as recipients of extraordinary pensions and gifts, and as functionaries in court transactions with the market. Their designation as "valets of the chamber" worked principally to mark their affiliation vis-à-vis other divisions (*estates*) of the court, that is, they were members of the ducal chamber and under the direct command of the duke himself. As we saw in the previous chapter, the court officers of the chamber such as keepers and stewards could occasionally receive payment for procuring goods themselves, but generally were the counterparts of other merchants and artisans who were furnishing the court. It is among the latter that we find the artisans named as valets of the chamber.

This fourth group designated as "valets of the chamber" in the ducal accounts were artisans such as Jehan Loys, ducal tailor (*tailleur*), Jean Marchant, ducal embroiderer (*broudeur*), Pierre Coustain, ducal painter (*peintre du duc*) and Gerard Loyet, ducal silversmith (*orfevre du duc*). Only ten artisans are designated as valet de chambre in the

[85] On Garnot Poucelot, see chapter 2. On Jacques Bregilles, see Jean Paviot, "Jacques de Bregilles, garde-joyaux des duc de Bourgogne Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire," *Revue du Nord* 77 (1995): 313-20. Interestingly, among those belonging to the ducal chamber, only the First Steward (*premier sommelier de corps du duc*) is not named also as a *valet de chambre.* I consider that this speaks to his elevated status and charge over other officers of the ducal chamber. See also, chapter 2, fn. 8.

accounts surviving from 1468 to 1471.[86] In addition to being occasional recipients of additional pensions or gifts, these men appear in multiple entries over these years, receiving various amounts of payments for specific goods and the labor they provided for the court. A close reading of these entries provide a window into what it meant to be a valet of the chamber as an artisan, and thus how the court organized and managed the skilled craftsmanship and artistry necessary for its functioning.

Artisans designated as "valets of the chamber" form a concentric structure around the ducal chamber, depending on their actual attendance in court and the nature of their materials and craftsmanship. There were, first of all, artisans who, like the other three groups of ducal valets, were residing in court, as part of an 'in-house' production. Artisans such as the ducal tailor, Jehan Loys, or the ducal cobbler, Guillaume Rondel, appear in the accounts almost monthly, being paid in numerous small and large amounts. For instance, Loys appears in 42 entries, and his average pay for each entry is approximately 30 pounds, excluding the very rare large payment for 475 pounds in July 1468.[87] The following entry is typical,

> To Jehan Loys, varlet of the chamber and tailor of robes of my said lord, the sum of 35 pounds and 16 shillings of the said price given to him for many pieces of his work (*mestier*)

[86] This excludes the *espiciers*, Philip Martin and Pierre Michiel. Officially, they were servants of the household tied to the *espicerie*, not the ducal chamber. Yet, they seem to have been designated *valet de chambre*, because of their role as suppliers of spices was akin to other merchants and artisans tied to the ducal chamber. The Michiel family, as we saw, were all in the spice trade in Bruges. In the accounts, Martin and Michiel appear periodically, being paid for the delivery of spices, and for supplying drugs, such as "a powder against pestilence ordered by master Simon of Sluis, composed of fine gold, droplets and other precious pieces." *Comptes II*, nr. 1440.

[87] *Comptes I*, nr. 1059. Though this entry does not detail the purpose of all the clothing made by Loys, it was most likely tied to the marriage of Charles the Bold to Margaret of York that same month.

> which he made and delivered for my said lord on the month of July, as follows. First, for the making of (*pour la fachon de*) two doublets of golden cloth, one violet and the other black, at the price of 72 shillings per doublet, being 7 pounds and 4 shillings. … for the making of a long robe of black velvet, 36 shillings … for double-layering (*pour avoir doublé*) a robe of velvet over velvet, 16 shillings … and for the making of four cornets, 16 shillings … by the receipt with certification of the said steward containing the price and the delivery of the said pieces, the sum of 35 pounds and 16 shillings.[88]

The relatively meager amount of the payments to Loys, in comparison to the expensive textiles that he was working with, as well as the phrase "for the making of" clearly record that he is being paid for his labor. The gradually decreasing price for the fashioning of each piece (72, 36, 16 shillings) implies there was a set scale of prices for the different kinds of labor employed in the process, even if the internal logic of those labor costs is hard for us to identify.[89] These prices also imply that the textiles used in this process were provided by the court to the ducal tailors, for the costs of the fabrics (as we saw in the previous section) far exceeded the amounts paid the artisans. Thus, we can see here how the court was organizing the production of clothing, through procuring raw material (textiles) from "merchants following the court" and then having "valets of the chamber" fashion them into robes, hats and other articles of dress. Artisans were employed as part of an 'in-house' production process, in which the court was the 'capitalist' who procured the

[88] *Comptes III*, nr. 2275.

[89] The cost of labor seems to be tied to the cost of the textile being fashioned, but without exact knowledge about the fashioning processes, it is difficult to make an educated guess. In the rare cases that the tailor purchased the textiles himself, it is clearly recorded, as in *Comptes III*, nr. 2212: "To Jehan Loys … for pieces of silk and others that, at the command and order of my said duke, he purchased and paid for (*il a achettees et payees*) at Middleburg in Zeeland." This entry from May of 1470 also confirms that Loys was residing in the court, as the court was in Middleburg in Zeeland from the 8 to 12 May that year. Vander Linden, *Itineraires*, 24.

raw material, provided the workspace, and employed the artisan as, in essence, a skilled 'wage-laborer.'

This in-house production process is replicated in other cases, such as that of the second ducal tailor, Loyquin d'Effetinghes, the ducal cobbler (*cordouanier*) Guillaume Rondel, and the ducal stocking-makers (*chaussetier*) Jehan de Bapalmes and Jehan Amoury.[90] The work of the ducal furrier (*pelletier*) Michel Le Sur also shows similar pattern, though the nature of the raw material, fur, necessitates some variation. First, in the case of more common fur, such as lambskin, which was easily available in the Low Countries, Le Sueur often is paid for procuring the lambskin itself, as well as fashioning it.[91] Next, in the case of rare and expensive fur, such as sable, the fur is usually purchased from private merchants in Bruges, rather than through court-merchants, and then provided to Le Sueur for fashioning.[92] Still, Le Sueur, as a valet of the chamber, was also residing in the court, and was managed and supervised by the officers of the ducal chamber. The luxury clothing which was the foremost concern of the court was subject to a tightly controlled process, coordinated by the ducal chamber, through its "merchants following the court" and its "valets of the chamber."

[90] *Comptes II*, nrs. 1429, 1501, 1529, 1557, 1596, *Comptes III*, nrs. 2131, 2558; *Comptes I*, nrs. 623, 724, 1065, 1447, 1977, 2074, 2120, *Comptes II*, nrs. 1173, 1180, 1209, 1216, 1428, 1460, 1521, 1595, 1610, *Comptes III*, nrs. 1859, 1885, 2155, 2166, 2261, 2356, 2391, *Comptes IV*, nr. II-161; *Comptes II*, nrs. 1403, 1442, 1595, 1609, *Comptes III*, nrs. 2125, 2156, 2349; *Comptes II*, nrs. 1413, 1443, 1461, 1485, 1572, 1593, *Comptes III*, nr. 2270, *Comptes IV*, nr. VIII-156.

[91] *Comptes III*, nr. 2351.

[92] Comptes *I*, nr. 1087, *Comptes II*, nr. 1054, *Comptes III*, nr. 2182.

The second class of artisans who were designated as valets of the chamber were nominally members of the ducal chamber but, much like the "merchants following the court," were based in the major cities of the Low Countries. Naturally, for an embroiderer like Jehan Marchant, who worked on silverware as well as vestments, or the painter Pierre Coustain, who worked on the decoration of chariots as well as banners and coats-of-arms, the costliness of the material they used and the scale of their productions required dedicated workshops unfit for an itinerant court. However, their designation as a valet of the chamber was not merely an honorary title or preferred vendor status that guaranteed that the court would purchase from their workshops. Rather, as we shall see in the records of their dealing with the court, their production was directed by the court, which either provided the original material or paid separately for the material and the labor, and often paid for their shuttling between workshop and court to receive the material and deliver the finished products.

A payment to the ducal valet Jehan Marchant, "residing in Brussels," in September 1468 is a striking example, not only for the large sum that he received but also for the details that it reveals. Marchant is paid 2,000 pounds, 2 shillings and 6 pence for "various pieces made and broidered by him" and delivered in March of the year before as well as June of that year. The entry flows over 6 folios and records in fine detail the various productions it entailed, such as: "for having made a bard [horse-cover] of black velvet ... for the fashioning, gold, silk and other various fabrics of the said master … made by accord with him, 180 pounds," or "for having embroidered a long robe of extremely rich satin … putting and placing thirty one marks and a half of silver, including the placing of

that silver, of the said price, and for the making and fabrics of embroidering, 252 pounds 12 shillings."[93] It carefully distinguished among the cost of fabricating the item itself, the cost of embroidering that item, the cost of metal included in it, and the cost of fashioning the pieces. But most remarkable are the details stated near the end:

> Item, for having cut, removed and detached the pendants and other silverware of many old pieces of silverwork belonging to my said lord … by the work of 68 females who were occupied for 10 days, each of them at 12 pence per day, being 34 pounds. Item, for having transported from the city of Mons in Hainault to the city of Brussels, in the month of March [14]67, the said old silverworks which he received by the order of my said lord, including 6 pence for one cask in which it was placed, total 31 shillings. Item, for, on the command of my said lord, for coming from Brussels to Mons on the said month of March to receive the old silverwork ... for six days [travel], at the price of 8 shillings per day, being 48 shillings. To him [Jehan Marchant], in the month of June [14]68, having transported from Brussels to Bruges, the said covertures and mantels, 60 shillings. …[94]

It goes on to detail the cost for a chest (*coffre*) to carry the items (10 shillings), the cost of using a chariot to transport them (60 shillings), and cost to cover other coworkers (16 pounds).

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[93] *Comptes I*, nr. 1513 "*Item, pour avoir fait une barde sur velours noir tout de broudure d'op bien richement et broudé de fuzilz de broudure, pour facon, or soye, et autres diverses estoffes de sondit mestier, par marchié a lui fait, 180* L *... Item, pour avoir broudé une longue robe de satin noir si richement que faire se povoit et sur icelle avoir mis et assiz trente marcs deux onces d'orfavrie, comprins l'assiete d'icelle orfavrie, audit pris et pour façon et estoffe de broudure, 18 L*."

[94] *Comptes I*, nr. 1513 "*Item, pour avoir fait copper, oster et lever les pendas et autre orfavrie de pluseurs anciens ouvraiges d'orfavrie appartenans a mondit seigneur et de ce, fait separarer le bon de cellui qui estoit mauvais et usé pour mettre le bon en euvre, en quoy 68 femmes ont esté occuppees par dix jours, qui a 12 d. a chascune d'elles par jour font 34 pounds. Item, pour avoir fait ammener de la ville de Mons en Haynnau jusques en la ville de Bruxelles, ou mois de mars 67, ladicte vielle orfavrie, en quoy il fu occupé tant alant, besoingnant audit mois comme enretournant, par six jours, qui au pris de 8s. par jour font 48 s. A lui, pour, ou mois de juing 68, avoir fait mener de Bruxelles a Bruges lesdix couvertoirs et mantelines, 60 s*."

This long detailed entry makes clear several important aspects of the process. First, Jehan Marchant, though a valet of the chamber, and nominally a member of the court, was residing in Brussels, where he had his workshop. From his stationary post in the city, he had to come to court to receive the material, and had to have it transported back to the court. Second, this workshop he headed must have been of considerable size. Not only the quantity of robes, harnesses, liveries, mantles, covers and other material being fabricated and embroidered, but also the mention of employing 68 female workers to disassemble old precious metalwork, provides a glimpse of its size. Moreover, the women were employed and paid wages on a daily basis, rather than being subsumed under the general operational costs of workshop. This implies that the workshop had a flexible system to manage various orders, probably hiring as needed. Third, Jehan Marchant's workshop was minutely managed by the court. The court did not go to Jehan Marchant's workshop to merely purchase finished set pieces, or commission certain products, but rather paid Jehan Marchant separately for the material, for the craftsmanship, for the employment of wage labor, and for the cost of transportation. The court even supplied old material to be recycled and reused by him.[95] All of this was organized through either accords (*marchié*) with him or by the order (*commandement, ordonnance*) of the duke. Even when the court had 'out-sourced' it production to the urban workshop, then, it was 'hands-on' about its operations. An urban artisan who was a valet of the chamber was not merely a successful

[95] *Comptes II,* nr. 1528 also shows Jehan Marchant receiving a dossel (*dochiel*, a long rich fabric hung behind altars or in halls) that was cut and removed from Brussels to be embroidered.

artisan-retailer who received favored vendor status from the court, but rather the head manager of the court's workshop in the city.

The works and careers of the ducal painters Pierre Coustain and Jehan Hennequart confirm and reinforce this impression.[96] Both Coustain and Hennequart received multiple payments for painting and decorating various equipment, and though the level of detail in each entry differs, they do not fail to add the exact phrase for "fashioning (*façon*)," "painting (*peintre*)," or "decorating (*estoffe*)." The subject of their paint and decorative work ranged from the expected blazons, coat-of-arms, banners for trumpeters, and pennons for lances, to tables, chariots, and buildings. For instance, in 1468 Pierre Coustain received 120 pounds for coloring in gold three chariots, for the sum of 80 pounds each.[97] That this did not include the price of building one, and that the court supplied the chariots to Coustain is confirmed by a nearby entry in which a certain Gilles de Cranebrouq is paid about 17 pounds for outfitting 3 chariots and taking them from Brussels to the Bruges, to "deliver (*porter*) the said chariots to the building (*l'ostel*) of Pierre Coustain."[98] This also confirms that Coustain had his workshop in Bruges.

The accounts also confirm the large scale of the artisans' workshops, as well as how they were supplied the material from the court, and how they coordinated with other

[96] On the career of Pierre Coustain, *Biographie nationale* (Brussels, 1873), 440-41 still provides the basic facts, while Antoine de Schryver, *Le Dictionnaire des Peintres belges du XlVe siècle à nos jours* (Brussels, 1995), 215-216 updates it with reference to his earlier work. I have not located any biographical entries for Jehan Hennequart, though his role as a painter of Burgundian heraldry has been known, and before becoming a ducal valet he received commissions for illuminating manuscripts. Léon Laborde, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, études sur les lettres, les arts et l'industrie pendant le xve siècle I* (Bruxelles, 1849), 466, 500, 503.

[97] *Comptes I*. nr. 886.

[98] *Comptes I*, nr. 889.

court-merchants and artisans. In August 1470, Hennequart was paid over 821 pounds for the delivery of more than a hundred different items, large and small, including a huge standard (*estandard*) depicting Saint George fighting the dragon.[99] In this entry, buried in the 6 folios of multiple fabrics used and equipment fashioned, we have record of Jehan Nyvart, the court-merchant, delivering one hundred and a half ells of taffetas to Hennequart. Hennequart then proceeded to make various items from the taffetas, such as standards for the captain of the archers, but 6 ells are in turn sent to Jehan Marchant, the court embroiderer, to make an embroidered cornet for two marshals of the ducal army. All these completed items were then sent from Brussels to Saint Omer, where the court was staying in July 1470.[100] The cost of chests and the use of the cart (*chaton*) for the delivery were paid for as well. The winter before, in November 1469, Jehan Hennequart was paid 15 pounds for dispatching two masters (*patrons*), one to Saint Bavo Cathedral in Ghent, and the other to the castle of Worden.[101] Hennequart, like Marchant, had his workshop in Brussels, with enough masters and apprentices on hand to meet the large demand of the duke. Nominally done at the "command" of the duke, these transactions were certified by officers of the ducal chamber, such as the Stablemaster, Jehan de Rochefay, for the delivery of banners and standards, and the First Chamberlain, Anthony of Burgundy, for

[99] *Comptes III*, nr. 1889. Charles the Bold had chosen Saint George as his protector, and this was most likely made as his personal standard. Charles would pay for the building of several goldpieces as well as banners depicting Saint George, most famous being the reliquary made by the ducal goldsmith, Gerard Loyet, depicting Saint George and Charles the Bold currently conserved in the treasury of Saint Paul's Cathedral, Liège.

[100] Vander Linde, *Intineraire*, 25.

[101] *Comptes II*, nr. 1620. The lack of payment to the masters probably means they were paid on the spot, by those in charge of the maintenance of the Cathedral and castle.

the painting of the interiors of the cathedral and castle. The court officers were the coordinators, directing the delivery of textiles by the court-merchant, their fashioning by the court painter's workshop, their decoration by the court-embroiderer, and the transportation back to the court.

Painting, as the above entries show, was a work of larger scale than embroidering. The varied and vast number of court furnishings and equipment, each with the insignia of the duke enblazoned upon it, evidently required large scale production. Painting operations also were subject to unexpected large demands on short notice, such as the funeral of the young duchess of Guelders in June 1469 which required many new black banners, wall hangings, cloth to "blacken the building (*avoir noircy ledit l'ostel*)."[102] So the Burugndian court had two workshops of painters, one in Bruges led by Pierre Coustain, and another in Brussels, by Jehan Hennequart. Often, Coustain and Hennequart were mentioned together in the receipts, even though they had separate workshops in different cities, meaning their combined production was needed for the occasions in question.[103] Likewise, the mobilization of the ducal navy in the summer of 1470, in alliance with those of the king of Portugal and the duke of Brittany, required the provision of new banners, guidons, and flags. [104] Interestingly, while the court met its needs through the workshop of Pierre Coustain, it paid outside painters, such as Tassin Moiset to prepare equipment for

[102] *Comptes II*. nr. 1340.

[103] *Comptes I*, nr. 909. *Comptes IV*, nrs. VII-42, VII-43.

[104] *Comptes III*, nr. 3334.

the other navies.[105] The court workshops in Bruges and Brussels were there to meet the demand of the court, while in extraordinary cases, the court would hire outside firms.

The career of Pierre Coustain reveals that he was well suited to lead the large-scale paint and decorative work of the court, and his designation shows the qualities sought in an 'artisan-cum-valet.' Before he became a valet of the chamber to the duke of Burgundy, Coustain was already named as the head of "the galleries of instruments (*engins*) at the castle of Hesdin in Artois" in 1450.[106] This entailed the management of various artwork and decorative equipment that was used in court entertainments, and to perform his tasks he had to be familiar with the material needed for the staging of court ceremonies. In 1454 he was named first named as "painter and valet of the chamber," and from then onwards, Coustain is regularly mentioned in the accounts providing various pieces for the court, including material for the Feast of the Pheasant (1454) and chapters of the Golden Fleece (1456, 1461, 1468).[107] In 1461, Coustain was also paid for painting representations of Saint Philip and Saint Elizabeth in the ducal palace in Brussels.[108] Coustain was clearly

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[105] *Comptes III*, nr. 3335.

[106] J. A. Crowe, *Les Anciens peintres flamands ,* vol. 1(Brussels, 1862), 4. *Engins* included mechanical devices used to surprise and entertain guests, such as hand-waving puppets and intricate mechanical fountains. Pierre Coustain was also one of the painters named a "peintre des princes." Laborde, *Les ducs*. There is some debate, however, regarding the origin of Pierre Coustain and his relationship to Jean Coustain, the *premier sommelier* of Philip the Good. H. Stein, editor of the *Memoires* of Olivier de la Marche considers it unlikely that they were of the same family, while Laborde reckons that they were are all members of the same Coustain family from the duchy of Burgundy. Charles the Bold had Jean Coustain executed but retained and elevated Pierre Coustain to ducal painter, suggesting that they were probably not closely related.

[107] Laborde, *Les ducs I,* 469, 479, 481, 493. Françoise de Gruben*, Les chapitres de la Toison d'Or à l'époque bourguignonne 1430-1477* (Leuven, 1997), 510-11, 526, 529, 553 reproduces the various receipts.

[108] *Biographie nationale*, 440, notes that the inspection was done by a "maître Roger, aussi peintre" which it claims was "sans doubte Roger van der Weyden."

valued for his long and extensive experience as a manager of producing materials for court occasions: having started as manager of a regional gallery, he expanded into providing material for major court ceremonies, and finally was selected to be the head productions manager for the court.

The information we have about Pierre Coustain provides a fascinating detail about the privileges that artisans enjoyed in return for working for the court. In March 1471, Coustain became the subject of judgment by Bruges authorities regarding the scope of work permissible, as a ducal painter.[109] Four master painters, including the famous Peter Christus, had brought a case against Pierre Coustain and his assistant (*serviteur*), Jehan de Hervy, claiming they were taking on work in the city without being citizens or paying dues to the painters' guild. The authorities pronounced that Pierre Coustain and his assistants could freely work in Bruges, "for matters that please our said most revered lord and [for] the lord princes, barons, and officers of his household only."[110] As a ducal valet, in charge of the court workshop in Bruges, Pierre Coustain was exempt from the constraints of the painters' guild, and beyond the orders from the duke himself was free to take orders from any other courtier tied to the ducal court. No doubt, it must have been lucrative business,

[109] The pronouncement reproduced in W. H. J. Weale, "Inventaires des chartes et documents appartenant aux archives de la Coporation de Saint Luc et Saint Eloi à Bruges." *Le Beffroi: Arts Heraldique Archeologie I* (Bruges, 1863), 204-5.

[110] Weale, *Le Belffroi*, 205: "*pour les affaires et bonplaisirs de mon dit tres redoubte seigneur et messeigneurs les princes, barons, et officiers de son hostel tant seulement, le tout sans fraude et malengien, et sans pour ce encourrir es peines et amendes des keures et coustumes du dit mestier des poincrtres de Bruges…"* His assistant Jehan de Hervy is found to have trespassed these terms and is ordered to acquire citizenship and membership in the painter's guild. This judgment is also the one cited by art historians to claim that Jan van Eyck, as valet de chambre of Philip the Good, must have enjoyed these same privileges as well when he was active in Bruges in the 1430-40s.

but also it underlines an important aspect of what it meant to be a valet of the chamber: one's membership and affiliation was not tied to resident cities but belonged to the itinerant court. In an era in which market and commercial activities were often highly regulated and constricted by local authorities, the court offered ambitious merchants and artisans the opening to widen their horizons and engage a broader clientele.[111]

Finally, the case of Gerard Loyet, valet of the chamber and silversmith, leads us to a better understanding of the relationship between the court and artisan-valets.[112] Just ahead of the diplomatic gathering in Ghent we witnessed at the beginning of the chapter, Loyet is paid 479 pounds to make a ceremonial sword (*espee de parment*) of gold for the duke. Like other court artisans, he was paid separately for the material (88 pounds 16 shillings for each mark of gold of 22 karats) and for the labor (72 pounds).[113] About the same time, he was also paid to repair the collar of the Golden Fleece worn by the duke. Both of these ornaments would have been vividly on display when duke Charles held court with representatives of various princes and cities, and the majority of the entries tied to Loyet involve similar tasks: repairing precious metalwork, providing metal ornaments, replacing pieces, gilding equipment, etc.[114] In the few cases where the court purchased a

[111] Furthermore, the cooperation between ducal artisans was also anathema to the respective guilds which sought to strictly demarcated and vigorously limit the crossover between various crafts. See Lorne Campbell, "The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century," *The Burlington Magazine* 118 (1976): 190-2. On the broader negative repercussions of fragmented jurisdiction over regional markets, and how political integration drove market integration in late medieval and early modern Europe, see S. R. Epstein, *Freedom and Growth: The Rise of States and Markets in Europe, 1300-1750* (London, 2000), 38-72, 147-168.

[112] On the career and works of Gerard Loyet, see Hugo van der Velden, *The Donor's Image: Gerard Loyet and the Votive Portraits of Charles the Bold* (Turnhout, 2000), 1-63.

[113] *Comptes II*, nr. 1472.

[114] *Comptes II,* nr. 1479.

finished piece, such as a robe made of silver threads, the receipt mentioned the estimated amount of silver in the piece.[115] Sometimes the work was collaborative, for those same robes were sent to Jehan Marchant for further ornamentation.[116] But, Loyet could also be supplied with the material by the court. In January 1470, he was paid 90 pounds for the craftsmanship of 3 gold images, made from 5 marks 7 ounces and 7 sterlings of gold supplied by Jacques de Bregilles, the Keeper of the Jewels.[117] On a larger scale, the entry of September 1468 recorded that Loyet received 1,740 marks and 2 ounces and 7 sterling of silver from Berthelmi Trotin, the receiver general of all finances.[118] Loyet was paid for melting it into 38 casts to make an assortment of silverware (*vaisselle d'argent*). Loyet, who was in Bruges during this time, must have had a major workshop to undertake the quantity and quality of work required of him.[119]

Dual entries from January 1469 suggest that the appearance of this name in the accounts denotes his workshop, rather than his person, and also clarify the particular role of an 'artisan-cum-valet.' At the very moment the workshop of Loyet in Bruges was presumably making the three gold images mentioned above, Loyet himself, this time titled as "counselor and general master of the mints of my said lord" was paid 6 pounds 6

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[115] *Comptes I,* nr. 598.

[116] *Comptes I*, nr. 599.

[117] *Comptes III*, nr. 2132.

[118] *Comptes I* , nr. 1559. These precious metals were most likely from the Burgundian mints which remained open, almost continuously, from 1466 onwards. Peter Spufford, *Monetary Problems and Policies in the Burgundian Netherlands 1433-1496* (Leiden, 1970), 122.

[119] Urban guilds also generally sought to control the supply of raw material, thus supply by the court would have been an additional benefit for artisans. Campbell, "Art Market," 192.

shillings to cover the cost of travelling for 7 days on a special mission.[120] Together with Jacques Le Muet, ducal secretary, they were ordered to head to Ghent and Antwerp and gain information about "certain new florins counterfeiting the good florins of Bavaria" which recently appeared in the Burgundian lands.[121] Though we do not know the results of this investigation, it demonstrates that Gerard Loyet, as the court's representative, was not only attending to the production and maintenance of precious metalwork and other ornaments, but also to the smooth functioning of business in the realm.[122]

The valets of the chamber in the court of Charles the Bold were ducal officers and servants who were principally tied to the duke and his personal chamber. Their title marked their primary affiliation within the court, indicating as well their place in the chain of command in the ducal chamber. Artisans who were also valets of the chamber were considered to be personally bound to the duke, regardless of and untethered from their towns of origin or residence. Some artisan-valets such as Jehan Loys or Michel Le Sur were literally in the court, provided with raw materials, paid for their labor, and managed by the ducal officers. Others, such as Jehan Marchant or Pierre Coustain were heads of workshops in major cities of the realm such as Brussels and Bruges, and their operations were overseen and coordinated by the court. In total, the court had two workshops in

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[120] *Comptes III*, nr. 2132 records that the items were delivered in January 1469. *Comptes III*, nr. 1095 stipulated that Gerard Loyet was on the road from January 21st to the 27th.

[121] *Comptes III*, nr. 1095: *"... pour fair informacion de certains florins nouveaulx contrefais aux bons florins de Baviere, ausquelz puis nagaires l'on a voulu baillier course s pays de mondit seigneur..."*

[122] Van der Velden, *Donor's Image,* does not mention this mission by the goldsmith Loyet, while Peter Spufford, *Monetary Problems,* 122 cites this mission without mentioning that Loyet was also the ducal silversmith. According to Spufford, what triggered the information gathering mission was the increasing rumors that the archbishopric of Cologne was debasing their florins.

Brussels and two in Bruges, in addition to their 'in-house' production. Together, they covered the production and maintenance of the material goods necessary for the presentation and staging of the court. The head artisans were valued for their ability to manage these workshops and the large productions they entailed, as much as for their personal craftsmanship. When necessary, the head artisans could also be dispatched as ducal representatives, employing their specialized skill and knowledge for the good of the realm. Thus, much like the "merchants following the court," artisans who were "valets of the chamber" were the ducal agents on the ground, constituting the commercial manifestation of the court and its location in the heart of the city.

IV.

Behind the scenes, the splendid execution of court occasions and rituals in front of the foreign diplomats and visitors present at Ghent in the summer of 1469 required a multitude of material goods and services. The presentation of impeccably dressed and adorned ducal officers and troops, the display of brilliant and dazzling metalwork, the overflowing of banners, blazons and standards, and the staging of elaborate equipment and instruments all required the procurement and production of material that exceeded the capacity of the ducal demesne and was beyond the scope of any one merchant or artisan. To ensure the successful realization of court life, especially in its itinerant form, the court needed to secure the goods from the markets of the urban network. But the volume and variety of material, as well as the demands of timely delivery and appropriate style, meant the court

could not merely purchase its way to magnificence. It had to harness the scale, speed and specialties of commerce and industry that their subjects in this most commercialized area of Europe, north of the Alps, provided them. To do so, it had to become an economic actor embedded in the market.

The court of Charles the Bold did so through a cohort of "merchants following the court" and artisans who were "valets of chambers." Bestowed with a title that looked back towards the days of spring campaigns and trailing markets, "merchants following the court" were ducal agents stationed in major nodes of the urban network of the Greater Low Countries. They were closely tied to the officers of the ducal household, and already established in their respective cities. They were the procurement branch of court business, providing the ordinary and luxury textiles endlessly demanded by the court. Utilizing a traditional title that rewarded loyalty and talent, artisans designated as "valets of the chamber" were, for their part, entrusted with the production of the material culture of the court. Depending on the nature of the material and the production processes, it was conducted in the court itself, or in large workshops in the cities of Brussels and Bruges, but free from the urban regulations that might have restricted their activities. The court coordinated and detailed the supply of raw materials, the cost of the skilled labor, the collaboration between different workshops, and their timely delivery and transportation. These artisans were thus the manufacturing branch of court business, creating and maintaining the material culture of the court. The court, itinerant as it was, extended its arms out into the cities, and the practices of the market were incorporated into the court.

But then the question arises: how did the courtiers of this princely court understand and channel the seeming contradiction between the outward manifestation of chivalric culture and the inward mechanism of commercial organization? If the veneer of feudal structures and titles was masking market-oriented operations and figures, did it not bring about a tension that was difficult to balance? If there existed an inevitable chasm between the court and the city, despite all its connections, how could the practices of the market and the culture of the court coexist in the princely court? This calls for a reconsideration of the court culture of the Burgundian Netherlands.

Chapter 4.

"So Great Riches, In so Little a Space" - Magnificence, Honor and Wealth in the Court Culture of the Burgundian Netherlands

I.

The previous two chapters examining the workings of the princely court reveal how market expertise and commercial practices were essential to the running of a nominally feudal court. Existing on top of an increasingly commercial urban landscape, the ordinary as well as the extraordinary activities of the court were dependent on a multitude of business-like operations run by courtiers in cooperation with designated merchants and artisans. Court officers such as Jehan Le Tourneur, the First Steward, and Jean de Rochefay, the Stablemaster, were crucial to these operations and indispensable to the prince, exactly because they were able to deftly navigate both the court and the market. Merchants and artisans such as Hacquinet de Lange and Pierre Coustain were established in urban centers but were simultaneously nominated as court factors and valets, procuring and trading for the court. Tied to one another by marriage relations as well as commercial transactions, these men were collectively in charge of managing the ducal liveries, jewelries, tapestries and finances. In this sense, the court operated much like a commercial enterprise, an eager and fully competent participant in the market economy.

Yet, these commercial operations of the princely court seemed to be serving a purpose and realizing a logic that was distant from—and even sought to be removed from—the marketplace. The aforementioned figures were, in their title and existence, courtiers and servants to the duke and they participated in realizing a court culture that seemed to look back towards a chivalric past.[1] Their business-like work in the court underpinned public expressions of a court life that were essential to the self-identity of the Burgundian court: garments procured from court-merchants were used in jousts that celebrated chivalric virtues; livery fashioned by valet-artisans were used for joyous entries and courtly encounters that were public spectacles, laden with elaborate rituals; jewelry and silverware managed by keepers and stewards were showcased at ceremonies and banquets reinforcing the prestige and fame of the ducal court; the tapestries produced by urban artisans and displayed in court ceremonies sought to evoke the sovereign virtues of the mighty prince.[2] In effect, it seems the workings of the princely court – as dependent on and embedded in market transactions and expertise as it was – were put to use in evoking an imaginary chivalric world of inherited status, rigid hierarchies, and a moral code of personal loyalty and honor.[3] As much as the court was floating on top of, feeding

[1] The image of Burgundian court as the final blooming of a chivalric culture is indebted to the seminal work by Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the* Middle Ages, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago, 1996) [Originally published as J. Huizinga, *Herfsttij der Middleeuwen: Studie over Levens- en Gedachtenvormen der Veertiende en Vijftiende eeuw in Frankrijk en de Nederlanden*. Haarlem, 1919]. For a critical review of the influences that led to Huizinga's classic and its historiographic impact see Edward Peters and Walter Simons, "The New Huizinga and the Old Middle Ages" in *Speculum* 74 (1996): 587-620.

[2] For a vivid illustration of the material culture of the Burgundian court see the recent exhibition catalogue, *Charles the Bold: Splendour of Burgundy 1433-1477,* ed. Susan Marti, Till-Holger Borchert and Gabriele Keck (Brussels, 2009).

[3] The modern understanding of chivalry as a fusion of martial, aristocratic and Christian ethos follows the lead of Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven, 1984). See also, Malcolm Vale, *War and chivalry:*

off of, and working inside of a vibrant urban economy, it seemed to mask that world under a veneer that made the court seem a magical, other place.

The Burgundian court certainly performed and presented itself as the embodiment of chivalric virtues. The Burgundian dukes, especially Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, were lavish patrons of jousts, tournaments, banquets and processions.[4] They were lauded for having maintained and revived the cultural prestige of princely courts in Northwestern Europe, during a time when the French royal court was in disarray following the turmoil of the Hundred Years War, the Imperial court of Holy Roman Empire remained weak and meagre, and the English Tudor court had not yet attained its own glory.[5] Their court was often mentioned as the greatest in Christendom by contemporaries, while it was presented as a model to be emulated by later princely courts.[6] In popular memory, the Burgundian court is synonymous with sumptuous banquets, splendid processions, and extravagant pageantries.

Warfare and aristocratic culture in England, France and Burgundy at the end of the Middle Ages (London, 1981) which considers chivalric culture as a response to the upward mobility of townsmen.

[4] Richard Vaughan, *Valois Burgundy* (London, 1975), 176-184. Otto Cartellieri, *The Court of Burgundy: Studies in the history of civilization*, trans. Malcolm Letts (New York, 1926, republished 1970) has the most detailed overview of the jousts and tournaments sponsored by the Burgundian dukes.

[5] C.A.J. Armstrong, "The golden age of Burgundy: Dukes that outdid Kings" in *The Courts of Europe: politics, patronage, and royalty, 1400-1800*, ed. A. G. Dickens (London, 1977), 55-75.

[6] The observation of Leo of Rozmital cited in Werner Paravicini, "The court of the dukes of Burgundy. A model for Europe?", in *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age c. 1450 – 1650,* ed. R.G. Asch and A.M. Birke (Oxford, 1991), 77. Louix XI created the Order of St. Michel in emulation of the Order of the Golden Fleece inaugurated by Philip the Bold. Edward IV of England had the household ordinances of Charles the Bold translated for his own use, as did Philip the Fair, son of Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian of Austria.

Historians have often sought to understand the public rituals and ceremonies of the Burgundian court under the rubric of the Burgundian "Theater State," that is, a method of state-building based on ritual performance and cultural persuasion.[7] They have considered the court ceremonies and public spectacles as not merely ostentatious frivolities but deliberately fashioned tools of statecraft. Modern studies have yielded fascinating analyses of their symbolic messages, their ideological intentions, and their power in shaping meaning for participants and observers. Such research has contributed to a better understanding of how cultural performances of the court could be singular vehicles as well as contested arenas of political strategies.[8] Nevertheless, it has been difficult to expose just what message the court was delivering, what power its performances bespoke, and why, in this age, displays and rituals of this kind would have spoken so loudly, and to whom.

[7] The term, initially formulated by C. Geertz, was appropriated for the Burgundian context by Walter Prevenier and Wim Blockmans in their *The Burgundian Netherlands* (Cambridge, 1986), 223-25 and *The Promised Lands: The Low Countries Under Burgunidan Rule, 1369-1530*, trans. Elizabeth Fackelman, rev. and ed. by Edward Peters (Philadelphia, 1999), 132-40. David Nicholas, "In the pit of the Burgundian Theatre-State: Urban Traditions and Princely Ambitions in Ghent 1360-1420" in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe,* ed. B. A. Hanawalt and K. L. Reyerson (Minneapolis, 1994), 271-95 emphasizes the courtly dimension, while Andrew Brown, "Bruges and the Burgundian 'Theatre-state': Charles the Bold and Our Lady of the Snow," *History* 84 (1999), 573-589 emphasizes the urban dimension.

[8] The literature on the court and civic ceremonies in the Burgundian Netherlands are numerous, and here I cite the most influential: Peter Arnade, *Realms of ritual. Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, 1996) argues that ceremonies became symbolic terrain in which the conflict between the prince and the urban subjects were worked out; Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La ville des cérémonies. Essai sur la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons* (Turnhout, 2004) documents how civic traditions and rituals were appropriated by the ducal authorities. See also the contributions by Andrew Brown and J. Van Leeuwen in *Symbolic Communications in Late Medieval Towns* ed. J. Van Leeuwen (Leuven, 2006).

In this chapter, I seek to understand the court culture of the era by recasting it in light of the commercial practices and customs that made it possible. I examine descriptive, prescriptive and literary sources—chronicles and memoirs of court ceremonies, treatises of princely advice, short stories and tales—that were disseminated in court circles to understand the cultural values and sensibilities that underpinned court life and its performances. I show that court spectacles were less choreographed ideology or ducal propaganda (although they were those things) than celebrations of material wealth and commercial prowess. I argue that such performances were manifestations of princely magnificence – a virtue that became more and more material rather than martial, and financial rather than moral. Finally, I argue that this changing sense of princely magnificence was linked to an honor system that acknowledged commercial wealth even as it sought to cloak it in traditional values. Thus, even the cultural aspirations of the court, seemingly distant from commercial life, were inadvertedly projections of its commercial prowess, and in enacting the ideals of the feudal past the court was presenting the ideals of a commercial future. It was in this sense that the court culture of the early modern era was at once Huizinga's final blossoming of a rich chivalric culture, and Burckhardt's harbinger of the modern world.[9]

[9] Huizinga, *The Autumn*; Burkhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy,* trans. S. Middlemore (Penguin, 1878, repr. 1990). On the difference between Burckhardt and Huizinga see Peter and Simons "The New Huizinga", 603-4 and Jo Tollebeek, "'Renaissance' and 'fossilization': Michelet, Burckhardt, and Huizinga," *Renaissance Studies* 15 (2001): 361-2.

II.

The marriage of Charles the Bold to Margaret of York, daughter of Edward IV, king of England, in July 1468 was the greatest court spectacle of Charles the Bold's reign. It was arranged after months of negotiations and a struggle to overcome obstruction by those in and outside his court.[10] The marriage solidified the Anglo-Burgundian alliance that Charles had pursued since he came of age as count of Charolais, against the wishes of his ailing father and the circle around him that had been pushing a détente and reconciliation with the French monarchy. It strengthened his hand against his avowed arch-enemy Louis XI, king of France, with whom relations had broken down following Charles' central role in the organization of the League of Public Weal in 1465. Most of all, it provided him with a grand opportunity to showcase himself as the heir of the 'Grand Duke of the West,' even if his title, as duke, was technically not the equal of those borne by kings and emperors. In the words of the English chancellor announcing the marriage to Parliament, the duke of Burgundy was "one of the mightiest Princes of the world that bears no crown."[11] The marriage marked Charles's triumph on the European stage, proof that he was worthy of the honor and glory so long sought.

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[10] On the marriage negotiations, see C.A.J. Armstrong, "La politique matrimoniale des ducs de Bourgogne de la Maison de Valois" in *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1983), 260-5; Richard Vaughan, *Charles the Bold: The Last Valois Duke of Burgundy* (London, 1973), 41-48; Christine Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503* (Gloucester, 1989), 31-7.

[11] *Rotuli Parliamentorum; ut et petitiones, et placita in Parliamento tempore Edwardi R. I. ad finem Henrici VII.* vol. 5, comps. R. Blyke, P. Morant, T. Astle, and J. Topham, ed. J. Strachey (London, 1832), 622-3.

The marriage festivities were so extravagant and sumptuous that they entered the realm of popular memory; even today they are reenacted every five years in Bruges.[12] For contemporaries, the spectacle inspired multiple 'eyewitness' accounts in French, English, Dutch and Latin.[13] An English account would go so far as to say that there was "none like to it, save King Arthur's court."[14] Considered "the most splendid and extravagant festivities in the entire annals of Burgundy," they continued for twelve days and were comprised of a range of activities.[15] The wedding procession was led by Margaret of York, garbed in white and gold, followed by the ducal retinue and all the luminaries in attendance. The wedding feast was held in a huge, lavishly decorated banquet hall, its interior lined by fine and rich tapestries embroidered with various historical and mythical allegories; an exhibition of the ducal silverware was placed in the center. Each day, the Tournament of the Golden Tree was staged in the central market square in honor of the bride, and every evening, lavish banquets entertained by theatrical performances were held in the courtyard of the ducal palace.[16]

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[12] Most recently in 19-26 August 2012. See the official website: http://www.goudenboomstoet.be/ Unfortunately, there are no contemporary pictorial records of the wedding ceremonies.

[13] For the various versions see Andrew Brown and Graeme Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries c.1420-1530* (Manchester, 2007) 54, n. 68 and Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 49, n.1.

[14] *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century,* Part. 1. ed. N. Davis (Oxford, 1971), 539.

[15] Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 48.

[16] The most detailed contemporary accounts are those by Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires d'Olivier de La Marche: maître d'hôtel et capitaine des gardes de Charles le Téméraire* III, ed. Henri Beaune et Jean d'Arbaumont (Paris, 1885), 101-201 and Jehan de Haynin, *Les Mémoires de Messire Jean, Seigneur de Haynin et de Louvengnies, Chevalier, 1465-1477,* vol. 1, ed. Renier Chalon (Mons, 1842), 106-132.

The location of the wedding in Bruges also accentuated the celebrations. Bruges was the most important emporium of northwestern Europe, home to international merchants, bankers, goldsmiths, and cloth merchants, and by then a favored residence of the Burgundian dukes themselves.[17] Not only had Charles recently expanded the ducal palace grounds in preparation for the wedding, but Bruges was also best suited to realize such an extravaganza. The Bruges city council was close to the Burgundian court, and more importantly it could mobilize the resources necessary for successfully hosting such an event. Having rich experience in putting on regional jousts and tournaments, the civic authorities partially funded the building and decoration of the stage in the central market and participated in organizing and paying for the entry procession. The city also presented expensive gifts to the new duchess and other members of the court.[18] No doubt the wedding was a spectacle for the wider urban populace, numerous foreigners and many dignitaries in attendance, but it was also an occasion for the city of Bruges to showcase itself alongside the duke as a "court city."[19]

All this display of the material opulence of the Burgundian court was certainly not lost on contemporaries, and the surviving eyewitness accounts devote themselves to elaborating just how dazzling, rich, splendid, and in fact marvelous all the festivities were. The Englishman John Paston exclaimed in his brief letter,

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[17] James Murray, *Bruges: Cradle of Capitalism, 1280-1390* (Cambridge, 2006), 360-72.

[18] Brown and Small, *Court and Civic Society,* 55-58: They also point to the account in *Excellente cronike van Vlaenderen,* presumably written by Anthonis de Roovere, who was a paid by the Bruges authorities to organize the entry procession.

[19] The phrase is borrowed from Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, 13.

> many pageants were plaid in her [Margaret of York's] way in Bruges to her welcoming, the best I saw ... as cloth of gold and silk and silver and goldsmith's work might make him [Duke Charles of Burgundy], for of such gear, and gold and pearls and stones, they of the Duke's court ... by my truth, I heard never of so great plenty as here is.[20]

The Burgundian courtier, Jehan de Haynin, on entering the Banquet hall, also marveled at all silverware on display and all the fine and rich tapestries hanging on the walls.[21] In these eyewitness accounts, the emphasis is on the immediately visual and concretely material splendor of the occasion.

This emphasis is not a mere coincidence, for it seems also the design of the extensive account by one of the organizers of the festivities, Olivier de la Marche (c.1434-1502), "the Burgundian courtier *par excellence,*" as he has been called[22] Having entered the Burgundian court as a page when still a child, he would later rise up the ranks to title of "grand and first master of the ducal household" and be considered a living 'master of ceremonies' of the Burgundian court by their Habsburg successors.[23] At the time of the wedding, he was one of the four "masters of the household" and together with Jacques de Villiers was in charge of organizing many of the festivities.[24] Soon after the festivities, he

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[20] *Paston Letter*s, 539.

[21] Haynin, *Mémoires I,* 108-9.

[22] Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy* (London, 1970), 158.

[23] Alistair Millar provides a sketch of la Marche's career in his "Olivier de la Marche and the Court of Burgudy, c.1425-1502" (Ph. D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1996), 1-54.

[24] Leon Laborde, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, études sur les lettres, les arts et l'industrie pendant le XVe siècle et plus particulièrement dans les Pays-Bas et le duché de Bourgogne*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1851), 322.

wrote a detailed account to Gilles du Mas, a fellow "master of the household" of the duke of Brittany.[25] As the title and role of the recipient makes clear, he was writing to present the recently concluded wedding ceremonies as a model to be emulated: the letter would at once trumpet the glory of the occasion and provide a manual for similar ones in the future.

The report of Olivier de la Marche exhibits an almost singular emphasis on the vivid and dazzling aspect of the festivities. Describing the banquet hall, Le Marche, like Haynin, spills the most ink on how the "tapestry was all made of gold, silver and silk, and I do not believe such a large and costly tapestry has ever been seen."[26] He makes little mention of the contents of the tapestries, other than nothing that they "represented the adventures of Jason and the story of the Golden Fleece." To the contrary, he goes on to meticulously describe how the banquet tables were covered with "very costly cloth-of-gold" and with "golden vessels garnished with precious stones" and how on the sideboards were found "other silver vessels, post and cups." Such brilliant display of silverware was possible "because Duke Philip [his late father], God rest his soul, had left for him supplies of more than sixty thousand marks, crafted and made to serve."[27]

This pattern of focusing squarely on the material aspects of the festivities is most pronounced in La Marche's long and detailed description of the entry procession of the newly wed duke and duchess. Though he provides the order in which the procession was

[25] La Marche, *Mémoires III,* 101. As Millar notes, much of the *Mémoires* was written in the decades after the death of Charles, but the wedding account seems to have been written soon after the wedding itself. For a literary analysis of La Marche's work see Catherine Emerson, *Olivier de la Marche and the Rhetoric of Fifteenth Century Historiography* (Woodbridge, 2004).

[26] La Marche, *Mémoires III,* 118.

[27] La Marche, *Mémoires III,* 119-120.

held, and at times names the various dignitaries who participated in each group, "as for the many princes, knights and squires, noblemen and nations who awaited my said lady that day, richly dressed and set, I pass over this to be brief."[28] Beyond adding that all in attendance were finely clothed, he wishes just to describe the procession. The members of the entourage themselves are of surprisingly little interest to La Marche; his almost exclusive focus is the display, especially the luxurious textiles that adorned the entourage. Here, for example, is one such passage:

> After the archers, marched the gentlemen of the household of the duke, two by two, then the chamberlains, and then the loyal lords who were great in number, and all were clothed in the robes and livery of my said lord, which were such that the squires had robes of black damask and doublets of crimson satin. The heads of offices had long robes of engraved black satin and doublets of crimson engraved satin, the knights and men of council had long robes of black velvet and doublets of crimson velvet, the servants and valets of the household all were clothed in black and violet woolen and camelot doublets. What should I say to you? My lord gave such and so greatly cloths of silk and wool for the livery that it cost more than forty thousand francs. And the knights and gentlemen clothed in the livery marching in order certainly made a fine view.[29]

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[28] La Marche, *Mémoires III,* 107-08. "*Et au regard du grant nombre des princes, chevaliers et escuyers, nobles hommes et nacions qui icelluy jour rencontrarent madicte dame, richement vestuz et en point, je m'en passe pour abreger …*"

[29] La Marche, *Mémoires III,* 109. "*Après iceulx archiers marchoient les gentilzhommes, deux à deux, de l'hostel de mondit seigneur, après les chambellans, et après les seigneurs du sang, qui furent à moult grant nombre; et furent tous vestuz des robes et pareures de mon dit seigneur, qui furent telles que les escuyers avoient robes de drap damas noir et pourpoints de satin cramoisy. Les chefz d'office avoient longues robbes de satin noir figuré et pourpointz de satin figuré cramoisy ; et les chevaliers et gens de conseil avoient longues robes de velours noir et pourpointz de velours cramoisy; et les serviteurs et varletz de la maison tous vestuz de drap noir et violet et pourpointz de camelot. Que vous diroy je? Tant et si largement donna monseigneur de drap de soye et de layne pour cette pareure, qu'il cousta plus de quarante mil frans. Et certes il faisoit beau veoir marcher en ordonnance les chevaliers et gentilzhommes vestuz de cette pareure.*"

Here, rather than the gentlemen or the officers, it is the black damask, crimson satin, velvet robes, violet woolens, and cloths of silk, their length, their combination and their worth that receive the main attention. [30] It is as if a description of how their clothing and dresses came together to present a "fine view (*beau veoir*)" would suffice to signal their significance.

The importance that La Marche places on being well dressed consistently extends to other groups participating in the wedding procession. Even though he does name several of the knights of the Golden Fleece and some of the dignitaries of the visiting English party, their entrance is also marked by a description of their attire. The knights were "richly dressed and decorated, some dressed in cloth-of-gold, others in many richly crafted metals" while the English were "very well set and richly dressed."[31] Other than Tomaso Portinari, who was a member of the ducal council, the foreign merchants ("*nations*") are also described exclusively in terms of their dress: Venetians were "dressed in crimson velvet" and Florentines wore "decorated black satin" while the Spaniards were "dressed in violet damask."[32] So too were the streets dressed: "and as for the streets, they were hung richly with cloth of gold and silk, and tapestries."[33] The citizens of Bruges who lined the procession receive no mention, and he apparently is able to recall the actual

[30] *Gentilzhommes de l'hostel* was not a court office, but was the title given to nobles and non-nobles who resided in the ducal household, receiving a fixed pension according to rank, and always present to accompany the duke in his public activities. See Chapter 1, above, for their role and function.

[31] La Marche, *Mémoires III,* 106. "*très bien en point et richement vestuz*"

[32] La Marche, *Mémoires III,* 112-113.

[33] La Marche, *Mémoires III,* 114.

contents of only two of tapestries.[34] Instead, the grand procession is described mainly as a colorful succession of richly clad retinues, each characterized by the variety of textiles and clothes they wore.

La Marche also meticulously details the preparations for the evening banquet following the procession, and while he provides a record of the ritualized presentation of the meals and emphasizes their abundance, the final section again returns to the visual perfection:

> The duke dined in the room assigned to him, and all the chamberlains in their correct order. This was a very beautiful thing to see, because they were all dressed the same in the livery of the duke, and all the servants in the correct order, each according to rank. And one could see no one among them dressed but in velvet and thick gold chains, in great number. So much for my description of the dinner.[35]

Just as in his description of the ducal retinue, the individuality of the figures fades into the background while the orderly arrangement of the ducal retinue "richly adorned and dressed (*moult richement parées et vestues*)" – to borrow another favorite phrase of La Marche – occupies the final remark.

This almost inordinate fascination with the fabrics that clothe the retinue of the ducal household and other groups in the procession can be better understood from the

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[34] La Marche, *Mémoires III,* 115. Though he mentions that he remembers ten of them, he then proceeds to actually only explain two.

[35] La Marche, *Mémoires III,* 122. "*et disna monseigneur en la salle pour luy ordonnée, et tous ses chambellans en leur reigle, qui estoit moult belle chose à veoir, pour ce que tous estoient vestuz pareil de la livrée de monseigneur, et tous les serviteurs de mesmes à leur degré ; et ne veoit on homme, parmy leans, que vestu de velours, et grosses chaisnes d'or à moult grant nombre; et à tant se taist mon escripture du disner.*"

perspective of the fifteenth century. On the threshold of the early modern era, one's social status was not only affirmed by the public exhibition of one's estate but even constituted by such display.[36] In the memorable words of Kaminsky, "although a noble's estate was constituted by his noble blood, his noble wealth, perhaps the noble virtues of his character … the estate itself was not these but the public entity they evoked."[37] On such an occasion as the entry of the newly married duke and duchess, the public and visual presentation of the ducal retinue *was* the social status of the court. Where public presentation was the official representation of ones status, luxury cloth was a treasured possession that would be instantly recognizable to others.[38] The details La Marche provides as he lovingly describes the various kinds of textiles, their shape and color, reveal that he expects his readers to share this knowledge, that they too can appreciate textiles in a way that is lost to us today. The colorful and luxurious garments so meticulously described in his text served, in themselves, to elevate the ducal retinue for the reader.

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[36] Howard Kaminsky, "Estate, Nobility and the Exhibition of Estate in the later Middle Ages" *Speculum* 68 (1993): 689-92. Also, for a discussion of this 'public aspect,' using Bourdieu's analytical concept of "symbolic capital" see W. De Clercq, J. Dumolyn and J. Haemers, "'Vivre Noblement': material culture and elite identity in late medieval Flanders: the case of Peter Bladelin and William Hugonet, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38 (2007), 1-31.

[37] Kaminsky, "Estate," 702. Or in the even more blunt words of Maurice Keen, "that style and those traditions were, after all, the outward and visible signs of its dignity, its *apartheid* from the common herd." Keen, "Chivalry and the Aristocracy," *New Cambridge History Medieval History*, vol. 6 (Cambridge, 2000), 218.

[38] "Clothing and heraldic emblems were the most conspicuous visual signs making social identification possible. Both were combined in liveries with heraldic colors." Wim Blockmans and Ester Donckers, "Self-Represetation of Court and City in Flanders and Brabant in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century" in *Showing Status: Representation of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages,* ed. W. Blockmans and A. Janse (Turnhout, 1999), 96. Also see in the same volume, Raymon van Uytven's "Showing off One's Rank in the Middle Ages," 29-34 on clothing and social status.

Yet, La Marche does more than simply describe the richly dressed procession and praise the luxuriousness and elegance of the show. Especially when presenting the ducal silverware or the ducal retinue, he calls attention to the monetary value of the material as well. As we have seen, he asserts that the silverware was worth over "sixty thousand marks" and that dressing the ducal entourage cost the duke "more than forty thousand francs." It is tempting to consider these assertions as mere hyperbole, just a phrase typical of pre-modern chroniclers who sometimes seem to have been unable to reckon and likely used to evoke the textiles' pricelessness, not their price. La Marche's position as an insider and organizer of the wedding festivities, however, requires that we pay more attention.

In the case of dressing the ducal entourage, comparison with the surviving ducal accounts suggest that his estimate was probably close to the truth. Two long entries itemized the cloth that was bought on the occasion of the wedding, just for the ducal household.[39] (Cloth for the retinue of the duchess or for gifts to other dignitaries appear in separate entries.[40]) The kinds of cloth listed in these accounts match those described by La Marche, but the accounts give additional information about the exact amount and kind, as well as who supplied them. The total price comes to 27,852 pounds and 22 shillings, or about two-thirds of the estimate La Marche gives.[41] Considering that the account entries

[39] *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire duc de Bourgogne,* vol.1, ed. A Greve, E. Lebailly, W. Paravicini (Paris, 2001), nrs. 2288-89.

[40] For instance, *Comptes* I. nr. 2290 describes the costs for the retinue of Isabel of Portugal and Mary of Burgundy.

[41] Here, I assume la Marche was also using the pound of 40 Flemish *groot*, the usual money of account in the ducal records. In his role as one of the master of the household, he would most likely have been familiar with the custom of using this money of account for evaluations and transactions.

contain only the cost of buying the material from the merchants and do not include the cost of fashioning them as ducal liveries, especially the cost of embroidering and decorating them, the figure given by La Marche may actually be closer to the truth.[42] But even if we consider only the lower figure that covers the cost of the materials to 'richly dress' the ducal retinue, in real-life terms, it would total 360 times the yearly wages of a master mason working in Bruges – an astonishing but by no means unbelievable sum.[43]

Furthermore, the monetary value of the textiles and silverware would also have evoked their importance to the economy of the Burgundian Netherlands. When the wedding treaty between Charles the Bold and Edward IV was negotiated in 1467, a parallel commercial treaty was also signed.[44] The central point of this treaty was the repeal of the English statutes of 1463 and 1464 that prohibited the import of all manufactured goods from the Low Countries under Burgundian suzerainty. Edward demonstrated his good will by lifting those sanctions even before the wedding, which meant that the export of fine

[42] Artisans who were also ducal *valet de chambres* were often paid for the work done to tailor material into ducal liveries. (see above, Chapter 3) Unfortunately, I have been unable to find entries which can be tied precisely to the work done on these ducal liveries for the marriage ceremonies which record the sums paid to valet-artisans who did such work.

[43] Based on indices in John H. Munro, "Builders' Wages in Southern England and the Southern Low Countries, 1346 -1500: A Comparative Study of Trends in and Levels of Real Incomes" in *L'Edilizia prima della rivoluzione industriale, secc. XIII-XVIII,* ed. Simonetta Caviococchi (Florence, 2005), 1053. Following Brown and Small's conservative estimate (*Court and Civic,* 54), the total costs of the wedding was approximately 60,000 pounds, or approximately 770 years' worth. For a crude comparison in contemporary terms, a construction manager in 2011 earned about 110,000 US dollars (according to the 2011 PAS Construction/Construction Management Staff Salary Survey), while the recent British Royal wedding of 2012 (considered modest by royal standards) is estimated to have cost 70 million US dollars, or approximately 636 years' worth of a construction manager's annual salary.

[44] Weightman, *Margaret*, 41-43. For a copy of the treaty, see Algemeen Rijksarchief, Chartes de Brabant et Chambre des Comptes, no. 134.

woolen cloth from Ghent, Lille, and other producers in the Low Countries had resumed.[45] For much of the early modern period, textiles were the cutting-edge industry and most prominent trade item, and the economic welfare of the Burgundian domains was closely tied to textile manufacture and trade.[46] The fabrics were put front and center in La Marche's account not just because they were so splendid but also because they were powerful symbols of the commercial might.

In similar manner, the exhibition of silverware was also a flexing of the financial muscle, akin to opening the treasury vault for viewing, while the mentioning its monetary value by La Marche was akin to putting a concrete figure on the strength of the ducal finances. Indeed, as Keeper of the Jewels, Jacques de Bregilles, along with his assistant, Charles de Visen, was responsible for the custody not only of the jewels but also of the household silverware and chapel vessels: according to one estimate, the office was responsible for over a million marks.[47] Possession of silverware was often a mark of sufficient 'liquidity,' to use a modern term, and hollow-ware of this kind could be used as

[45] Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 46.

[46] For the economic context of these negotiations, especially the contentious question of exchange rates, and the dependence of Flemish draperies on English wool, see John H. Munro, "Anglo-Flemish Competition in the International Cloth Trade, 1340 – 1520,' *Centre européen d'études bourguigonnes* 35 (1995), 37-60; For the state of woolen production in the Burgundian realms see *La draperie ancienne des Pays-Bas: Debouches et strategies de survie 14e-16e siècle,* ed. Marc Boone and Walter Prevenier (Leuven, 1993).

[47] Otto Cartellieri, *The Court of Burgundy*, 66. Just as goldsmiths also played the role of money lenders and were forerunners of banks in late medieval and early modern Europe, court officers such as the *garde des joyaux* or *orfèvre du duc* also performed financial functions. Charles de Visen worked at the *Chambre de Comptes* before becoming an aide to Jacques de Bregilles and later succeeded him. (See above chapter 2) See also Jean Paviot, "Jacques de Bregilles, garde-joyaux des duc de Bourgogne Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire," *Revue du Nord* 77 (1995): 313-20 who shows that Bregilles gained the confidence of the dukes in his role of receiving and transmitting important sums of money.

security for financial transactions, even easily melted or sold to raise cash if necessary. [48] Before the era of credit ratings, the presentation of precious metal and stones such as silverware and jewelry was a showcasing of the 'sterling credit' of the prince. The financial soundness of princes was not taken for granted. For instance, one of the reasons the wedding date was pushed back to July rather than held in May as Charles originally wished was because Edward had not yet provided the 50,000 crowns he had pledged as the first installment of Margaret's dowry.[49] The silverware on display at the wedding served, then, not just as a reminder of Charles's dignity but also as a reminder of his solvency.

Therefore, this wedding ceremony, and other similar events, with their traditional entry processions, lavish feastings, and jousting, were staged not just to showcase elegance or simply to display wealth. They were also a way of demonstrating fiscal solidity. The court was not only rich and beautiful, the displays seemed to say, it was prudent and skillful with money; its wealth was evidence of those qualities. The luxurious dress worn by the courtiers, the costly tapestries adorning the interior, the precious silverware used by the dignitaries – these were not merely sparkling ornaments for the rituals but rather the essence of the public manifestation of the court. Courtly culture was presented and existed through its material culture, and its material culture was a sign and projection of the commercial culture that it made possible – and which the court controlled. Just as the nominally feudal structure of the court meshed with the commercial operation of the court,

[48] Edward IV himself had to pledge some of the crown jewels to a London goldsmith to raise part of the dowry payment. Weightman, *Margaret*, 42. Maximilian, archduke of Austria, who inherited much of these silverware would have many of them melted to finance his war against France and to pay his German mercenaries.

[49] Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 48.

the courtly realm of ceremonies and festivities was also a theater of commercial prowess. In enacting the feudal and chivalric culture of the late medieval, the Burgundian court was simultaneously signaling and embodying the market culture of the early modern.

III.

> It belongs to magnificence to do something great. … if anything regarding himself admits of greatness, the magnificent man accomplishes it magnificently: for instance, things that are done once, such as a wedding.
>
> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q. 134, A. 1.

To us, the notion that a courtly culture enacting chivalric ideals was also projecting commercial virtues can seem paradoxical, if not contradictory. However, as I will argue in this section, to a Burgundian courtier, the chivalric and commercial could be reconciled and were not necessarily dissonant. For the courtiers, the differences between virtues demanded by the court and the market were not as stark as we often assume. It was not simply, as scholars have long agreed, that commerce depended on courtly extravagance and that courtly extravagance, in turn, depended on commerce. Rather, the court was an expression of commercial values, and even the most idealized portrayals of courtly life were necessarily and often quite unashamedly celebrations of commerce. Just as the court itself admitted men of commerce to its inner circles so too did court culture incorporate market culture.

A key to such an understanding in the context of courtly culture was the idea of "magnificence."[50] Even before it received full theorization in the Italian Renaissance, magnificence was an ideal that had gained currency since the European rediscovery of many of Aristotle's texts and their incorporation into the works of Thomas Aquinas.[51] The Burgundian court, especially thanks to its fascination with Alexander the Great, was well aware of the idea of magnificence in antiquity.[52] It was a notion that could lend legitimacy to a burgeoning dynastic power that lacked royal lineage or territorial integrity. Furthermore, when magnificence was firmly tied to great expenditure and largess, it would

[50] Art historians have long considered "magnificence" a major underlying theme in the Italian Renaissance. Ernst Gombrich first called attention to the idea in his "The Early Medici as Patrons of Art" in *Italian Renaissance Studies,* ed. E. F. Jacobs (London, 1960), 279-311. It was given scholarly elaboration by A. D. Fraser Jenkins in his seminal "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage of Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970), 162-170. Scholars such as Dale Kent, Francis Kent, and James Lindow (see the latter's *The Renaissance Palace in Florence: Magnificence and Splendour in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (London, 2007) have examined how the idea justified and guided grand building projects in Renaissance Italy. Also see Richard Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Renaissance Italy 1300-1600* (Baltimore, 1993), 206-8, 220-21. For the Burgundian Netherlands, Thomas P. Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance:Art and Magnificence* (New York, 2002) uses the ideal of magnificence to explain the phenomena of tapestries in princely circles, but doesn't elaborate on a specific Burgundian understanding of the idea of "magnificence."

[51] On the circulation and reformulation of Aristotelian and Thomist thought in the Low Countries, see A. J. Vanderjagt, "Burgundian Political Ideas between Laurentius Pignon and Guillaume Huguesnet" in *Fifteenth Century Studies* 9 (1984), 197-213. For instance, a copy of Nicole Oresme's French translation of Aristotle's *Ethics* is listed in the 1467 inventory of the ducal library in Bruges, and currently preserved as MS. 9505-9506 in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale.

[52] The Burgundian fascination with Alexander the Great is well attested in the patronage of various manuscripts and tapestries that depicted Alexander the Great. Most famously, Philip the Good commissioned Jehan Wauquelin to compile a great history of Alexander the Great in 1448. Chrystèle Blondeau, "A Very Burgundian Hero: The Figure of Alexander the Great under the Rule of Philip the Good" in *Flemish Manuscript Painting in Context:Recent Research*, ed. Elizabeth Morrison, Thomas Kren, J. Paul (Los Angeles, 2006), 27-42 provides an useful overview of the phenomena, and considers that in the figure of Alexander the Great, the Burgundian dukes saw a model for their crusades (Conquest of the East) and justification of their territorial expansion and autonomy vis-à-vis the French monarchy. For a more detailed discussion, see her recent monograph, *Un conquérant pour quatre ducs: Alexandre le Grand à la cour de Bourgogne* (Paris, 2009).

justify and channel the production and consumption of commercial wealth into a courtly virtue. This process of adapting and appropriating the concept of magnificence was being worked out in Burgundian circles and realized in its court performances.

To a medieval prince, a wedding was a unique opportunity for such magnificence. As Aquinas unequivocally stated, to do a great thing was reserved for a great man and for a singular occasion, such as a wedding.[53] The advice would not have been lost on Charles and his courtiers, and the spectacle and splendor of the wedding festivities can be understood as an exercise in such magnificence. Still, Aquinas did not elaborate on how a wedding could be magnificently accomplished, nor did the writings of Aristotle provide explicit elaboration on what a magnificent marriage was. It was only in the second half of the fifteenth century, concomitant with the age of Burgundian splendor, that humanists in Italy would begin to articulate a theory of magnificence based upon the idea that magnificence was materially achieved by rulers who were great builders, whether of cityscapes, urban palaces, or public buildings – an idea that would be influential throughout the following century.[54] I argue that the Burgundian court was in effect practicing and realizing a similar concept of magnificence that was more deeply rooted in medieval chivalric ideals, and yet, by incorporating the ideas of Aristotle and Aquinas, also

[53] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York, 1947), II-II, Q. 134, A.1

[54] Giuniano Maio's *On Majesty* (1492) and Giovannni Pontano's *On Splendor* (1498) provided full theorization of the concept. Peter Howard, "Preaching Magnificence in Renaissance Florence," *Renaissance Quarterly* 61 (2008): 325-369 sees the ideal appearing earlier in the fifteenth century and in wider fields such as oratory.

reflected commercial virtues. The link can be seen in a mid-fifteenth treatise by a Burgundian courtier, *Instructions for a Young Prince* (*L'Instruction d'une jeune Prince*). [55]

Instructions was a treatise providing advice on princely conduct and government, written by a Burgundian courtier of the first degree. The treatise is set in the guise of a fictional manuscript, written by a valiant knight "Foliant de Ional" on the commission of King Ollerick, as instructions for his heir and son Rudolph, and recently discovered by a "Picardian knight" in Norway on his return trip from Prussia.[56] Though the actual author is anonymous, traditionally it has been considered to be a work by Ghillebert de Lannoy, though recently his brother, Hugo, has been suggested as the author as well.[57] The brothers were natives of Walloon Flanders, loyal vassals of the Burgundian dukes, and members of the Order of the Knights of the Golden Fleece, the prestigious and highest honor in the Burgundian court. They both had extensive experience as combatants in the Hundred Years War, as diplomats in service of the dukes across Europe and as governors of Burgundian territory, the fort of Sluys and the county of Holland and Zeeland respectively.[58] As the title also notes, it was written to be presented to a "young prince,"

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[55] *Œuvres de Ghillebert de Lannoy, voyageur, diplomate et moraliste,* Charles Potvin (Louvain, 1878). The modern scholarly edition is by C.G. van Leeuwen, *Denkbeelden van een vliesridder. De "Instruction d'un jeune prince" van Guillebert van Lannoy* (Amsterdam, 1975). Here, I quote the reproduction in *Denkbeelden*. The exact dating of the book is up for debate, though most scholars agree that it was sometime between 1435 and 1442.

[56] *Denkbeelden,* 3-9.

[57] Bernhard Sterchi, "Hugo de Lannoy, auteur de *l'Enseignement de vraie noblesse*, de *l'Instruction d'un jeune prince* et des *Enseignements paternels*," *Le Moyen Age* 60 (2004): 79-117.

[58] *Biographie Nationale,* vol. 11 (Brussels, 1891), 308-325; Jacques Paviot, "Ghillebert de Lannoy" in *Les Chevaliers de l'Ordre de la Toison d'or au Xve siècle: Notices bio-bibliographiques*, ed. Raphaël de Smedt (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), 42-45.

evidently Philip's son Charles the Bold, then still in his childhood. Unlike the story in the prologue, there is no evidence that Philip commissioned the book for his son. However, it retained a place in the library of Charles the Bold, and he had the manuscript illustrated by his painter, with a miniature of the treatise being presented to the young Charles.[59]

Instructions provides a window into the chivalric yet commercial ideals of princely conduct that resonated in Burgundian court circles. Whether Ghillebert or Hugo was the author, the Lannoy brothers were not systematic philosophers or scholastic clergymen in the mold of Aristotle or Aquinas. Rather they were practical men of the world – warriors, diplomats and statesmen, in service of a temporal lord. *Instructions* does not seek to strictly delineate the differences or analyze the relations among the various concepts presented in the treatise. Nor does it try to forge or develop a new definition, as the heavy debt to Aquinas and Aristotle shows. Rather the author of the text is trying to make classical virtues relevant and practically useful in the lives of his contemporaries in a changing world, to use inherited language to help himself and his prince navigate the variegated and sometimes murky landscape of the late medieval and early modern era.

Through the advice put forward in *Instructions*, we can witness a sense of magnificence that was derived foremost from a chivalric ideal in which martial courage and prowess are paramount but is subtly transforming into a courtly notion of greatness in mind and deeds, projected through cultural projects presented in public and dependent on

[59] *Comptes* III, nr. 2310: Jean Hennequart, *peintre et valet de chambre du duc,* was paid a sum of 11 £ 17 s. in September 1470 to illustrate *L'instrucion de joisne prince* and other parchements. The manuscript is preserved as MS. 10967 in Brussel, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België and MS 5104 in Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.

great finance. After a short first chapter on "fearing God as the first commandment of wisdom," the second chapter focuses on the personal virtues that a prince must attain in order to maintain justice as the first commandment of law. Lannoy mentions that a prince must have the "four cardinal virtues" of "prudence, justice, continence and fortitude."[60] In this sense, he is following a well-established medieval tradition for articulating and understanding the classical virtues of antiquity. Yet the small changes he makes are quite telling. Whereas Aquinas had stated that the three Christian virtues of "faith, hope and charity" were guiding principles for the four classical virtues, Lannoy subsumed these three Christian virtues under an explanation of the first cardinal virtue of "prudence."[61] Also, he changes the traditional arrangement of the four cardinal virtues used by Aquinas, switching continence into the third and fortitude into the fourth (Aquinas's order was "prudence, justice, fortitude and continence"). This change of scheme, though minor, allows him to briefly discuss the first three and then permits him to dwell almost exclusively and most extensively on the fourth virtue of "fortitude" which he explicates as "also called magnanimity, greatness of soul or force of courage."[62]

Lannoy's decision to let these qualities substitute for or be equated with the fourth and most important virtue of fortitude signals Lannoy's intent to join several ideas under

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[60] *Denkbeelden,* 12.

[61] *Denkbeelden,* 12. In Aquinas's terminology, the three virtues of "faith, hope and charity" are "theological" virtues. They retain a different category since they are considered to reflect the nature of divine and thus are gifts of God rather than merits attained by human endeavor. Lannoy seems to do away with such distinctions and offers "faith, hope and charity" as companions to assist prudence, the "foundation" of all virtues.

[62] *Denkbeelden,* 12 . "*force que aulcus nomment magnanimité, haultesse de coeur ou force de courage.*"

one rubric. Formally, Aquinas had divided fortitude into several parts made up of magnanimity, magnificence, patience, and perseverance.[63] Aquinas narrowly used the term magnanimity as "stretching forth of the mind to great things" while magnificence was, for him, literally "to do something great." Likewise, patience was considered to "safeguard the good of reason against sorrow," while perseverance was to "persist long in something good until it is accomplished." Such distinctions or precision are lost on Lannoy, for in his explanation,

> Magnanimity is the fourth of the virtues which we must greatly honor, because no knight of great renown has ever undertaken valiance in arms, worthy of memory, without its company, aid and comfort. This virtue according to our language means that force of courage or boldness that belongs especially to princes and knights. Because of her nature, she is reinforced against all that can befall: against lance, bombardment, cannon, torment of sea, harshness of winter, fervor of summer, and great number of enemies, and cities, forts, castles enclosed in walls … "[64]

For Lannoy, the various elements of fortitude that in Aquinas's telling combined to make it a cardinal virtue are effaced and we are left with one martial virtue, which he calls magnanimity. It is a chivalric virtue shared by the knight and his prince, equipping them to undertake hardship and gain renown. Though this virtue needs to be tempered by "reason and justice," still neither "the spilling of blood" nor even "death" can stop a knight from the pursuit of "honor and great fame."[65]

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[63] *Summa*, II-II, Q.128

[64] *Denkbeelden,* 14.

[65] *Denkbeelden,* 14.

Yet this traditional notion of magnanimity as a martial virtue would face difficulty in the face of changed reality, and Lannoy switches the emphasis from "force of courage" towards the "greatness of soul." The traditional path for a knight would be to win a glorious name in battle, but as Lannoy's fifth chapter on war recounts – most likely based on his experience of the Hundred Years War – he sees war as detrimental to the common good and urges the prince to keep the peace.[66] Thus, addressing the prince directly, he shifts this fourth virtue (fortitude rendered as magnimity) away from simple courage and martial prowess into a series of recommendations that implore the prince to pursue loftier achievements.[67] Much of the advice emphasizes the need to exercise justice and magnanimity and to be generous and gracious to his vassals and people: the prince should keep his word to his subjects, the prince should not harshly punish, the prince should listen to all sides.[68] Though Lannoy does not specify the deeds by which the prince may gain renown, the practical dimension of the fourth virtue is not to pursue martial feats but to practice acts that benefit the public and elevate the prince, positioning him as a higher authority.

This section opens the way to a discussion of largess and liberality, concepts that were often confused and fused with magnificence. In his *Ethics*, for example, Aristotle

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[66] *Denkbeelden,* 30-32.

[67] Furthermore, according to C.G. Leewen, it is from this point onwards that Lannoy's *L'Instruction* begins to differ from his other treatise, *l' Enseignement de vraie noblesse*. The material in in this section was added by Lannoy as advice specific for the prince.

[68] *Denkbeelden,* 14-15. As part of his advice regarding the great deeds that the prince should strive for, Lannoy enters into a long digression about the ancient knightly virtue of "*francise*," which the prince, also as a knight, should also hold and upkeep.

discussed magnificence after liberality, commenting that "the magnificent man … can discern what is suitable, and spend great sums with good taste. … The magnificent man will therefore necessarily be also a liberal man."[69] So, Lannoy also emphasizes that "largess and liberality in all things belong to princes and grand lords, because they are praised and acknowledged."[70] The bestowal of gifts, and generosity more generally, would constitute magnificence. But as Aquinas articulated, the gifts princes distributed should not be understood as mere distributions of wealth: "The magnificent man also makes gifts of presents … but not under the aspect of gift, but rather … in order to honor someone, or in order to do something which will reflect honor on the whole state."[71] So, Lannoy next hastens to add that the prince should avoid "men of base condition" and "keep company and enjoy pleasures and festivities with noble men, sages and the well-known."[72] It was the prerogative and the privilege of the prince to bestow gifts to honor his subjects, and doing so lavishly yet artfully would be the true mark of magnificence.

For even greater effect, Lannoy invokes the example of the Philosopher and Alexander the Great: "as testified by Aristotle, who in the advice that he made to King Alexander, pointed out that, for a prince who gives generously, there is no need to build a strong castle."[73] This had a double effect. First, it brought discussion of the fourth virtue around full circle. As courage was a necessary component of magnanimity, largess was a

[69] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*. trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, 1934), 1122a-b.

[70] *Denkbeelden,* 16.

[71] *Summa*, II-II, Q. 113. A.3

[72] *Denkbeelden,* 16.

[73] *Denkbeelden,* 16.

necessary component of magnificence, and furthermore, in his metaphor and in practical terms, such magnificence was greater than the initial marital aspect: largess bests a fortress. Second, it invoked the magnificence of King Alexander's court, which was a subject of fascination in Burgundian circles. Indeed, for the Burgundian dukes, Alexander the Great was the historical embodiment of princely magnificence. Philip the Good had commissioned a series of tapestries that depicted scenes from the *Romance of Alexander* (*Roman d'Alexandre*), while Charles the Bold himself had sponsored the French translation of a biography of Alexander by Quintus Curtius, and had it read to him at night.[74] During the wedding ceremonies, a pictorial hanging (*tableaux*) of King Alexander's marriage to Cleopatra was hung on the hotel of the duke.[75] By conflating the virtues of fortitude and magnanimity, then associating the latter with the practice of liberality and largess, and evoking the example of Alexander, Lannoy paved the road from a martial and chivalric virtue of fortitude into a courtly and princely virtue of magnificence.

Lannoy was well aware that the practical dimension of realizing such magnificence was finance. In the seventh chapter where he takes up the subject of princely finances, Lannoy states that "he who knows the greatness and magnificence which belongs to the prince, ought to know that conduct of his estate belongs to very great finance."[76] Rather than treat finance as a matter not befitting the prince (and better relegated to subordinate

[74] Pierre Cockshaw, "Les manuscripts de Charles de Bourgogne et de ses proches" in *Charles le Témérair, 1433-1477*, ed. P. Cockshaw, C. Lemaire et A. Rouzet (Brussels, 1977), 6-9; Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 163, 181-2; See above, fn. 52.

[75] *Memories* III, 116.

[76] *Denkbeelden,* 35. "*Qui congnoist la haultesse et magnificence qui appartient aux princes, doit scavoir que a la conduite de leur estat appartient moult grans finances*."

officials), he implores the kings and princes to diligently attend to the supervision and government of their finances.[77] He goes on to summarize the traditional (and unrealistic) view that the prince should finance himself from "his own provisions and his traditional domains."[78] Extraordinary means of revenue such as gifts, favors, or levying taxes or aids or extractions on the people can only be justified for proper defense or benefit to the people but also (unsurprisingly) the marriage of princely children![79] Turning more specifically to the question of expenditure, he cautions that "war can consume all finance," but he easily justifies money spent on the accoutrements of the court and courtly life, such as clothing, horses and harnesses, equipping the guards, charity and alms, generous gifts to nobles and ambassadors and messengers.[80] These things were the stuff of magnificence, and princes needed to manage their finances to make these prerogatives and privileges possible.

This final aspect of magnificence as a princely virtue is evident in the overall context Lannoy provides. In both the second chapter on princely virtues and the seventh chapter on princely finance, Lannoy situates magnanimity and magnificence under the guiding principle of "governing people and maintaining justice." Whereas for Aristotle magnificence was above all a virtue to be pursued by men of great means, and for Aquinas magnificence meant the production of a great work that would ultimately honor God, for Lannoy magnificence was a matter of governance and justice.[81] In the eyes of noble

[77] *Denkbeelden,* 35.

[78] *Denkbeelden,* 35. "*le vivre du leur et de leurs anciennes demaines.*"

[79] *Denkbeelden,* 35.

[80] *Denkbeelden,* 37-8.

[81] This understanding of "magnificence" in terms of governance can also be witnessed in Guillaume Fillastre (the Younger)'s reworking of Germain's ideals in which he postulated "magnificence" as

subjects such as Lannoy, the personal virtue of the prince needed to be projected in great public works – works that would properly honor the prince and his court and thereby uphold public order by establishing his authority, allowing him to "do justice."

Seen in this light, the ceremonies of the Burgundian court, and the wedding of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York in particular, were performances of princely magnificence.[82] As Lannoy makes clear, of the many virtues that a nobleman could strive for, magnificence was the one that belonged to princes and grand lords alone. A knight could pursue fame through valor, a nobleman splendor in his household, but magnificence was reserved for a prince. The public procession in colorful liveries of fine and luxurious cloth, the splendid arrangement and decoration of the banquet hall in the courtyard, the brilliant display of tapestries and silverware and the lavish feast that was provided were testimonies of the magnificence of the prince – all the more magnificent since the wedding was adjoined to the great deed of a political triumph in the form of an Anglo-Burgundian alliance and a commercial success in signing a treatise that re-opened the export of Flemish woolens to England. Furthermore, it was magnificent because the luxurious cloth, the splendid tapestries, the abundant banquet, the fabulous joust were all provided by the duke

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prime among the four cardinal virtues. A. J. Vanderjagt, "Classical Learning and the Building of Power at the Fifteenth-Century Burgundian Court" in *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East,* ed. J.W. Drijvers and A. A. MacDonald, (Leiden, 1995), 276-77. Guillaume Fillastre, Bishop of Tournai and Burgundian councilor was made the chancellor of the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1461.

[82] After the death of Charles the Bold, the chronicler Jean Molinet would include this wedding in the "les magnificences du duc Charles." *Chroniques de Jean Molinet*, ed. G. Doutrepont and O. Jodogne, vo.1 (Brussels, 1935), 170-71. For a fuller description of the twelve events included by Molinet, see Werner Paravicini, "Die zwölf 'Magnificences' Karls des Kühnen," in *Formen und Funktionen öffentlicher Kommunikation im Mittelalter*, ed. G. Althoff, (Sigmaringen, 2001), 319-95.

as gifts to his retinue, to his guests in attendance, and to the populace in audience. Little wonder that in the description by la Marche, the final scene of the wedding ceremonies showed the heralds crying "largess!" while Duke Charles doled out gifts of silver.[83]

This idea and practice of magnificence justified the demonstration of the commercial wealth that made such extravagant expenditure possible. To the Burgundian courtiers in pursuit of magnificence, the tremendous payout that was documented in the previous section was not seen as wasteful spending nor even as conspicuous consumption. Rather, it was a fitting public presentation of the 'estate' of the prince and his court. It was a necessary public demonstration of the largess and liberality of the prince. It was a potent display of the richness and orderliness of the ducal entourage that legitimized its suzerainty over disparate domains.

A comparison with the Italian Renaissance underscores this point through similarities and contrast. Whereas a Renaissance prince of an Italian city-state would foremost concentrate above all on erecting public squares and buildings in the center of his city, the Burgundian duke, who, as an itinerant prince constantly moving between his various territories, would focus instead on public processions and ceremonies. And whereas the Italian prince would order and justify the social hierarchy of his realm in the rational and aesthetic layout of the square and building (and their benefit to the public), the itinerant prince would do so in the orderliness and splendidness of his entourage (and the largess he would provide at the occasion). This also explains why La Marche marveled at the sight of seeing all of the duke's men not only dressed "in velvet and thick gold chains"

[83] *Memoires* III, 200.

but also all in "correct order" and "according to rank." This "beautiful sight" at the end of the banquet scene projects in the miniature of a court ceremony the ideal of an opulent and orderly society, with the court as its generator and guarantor.

Even as the wedding ceremony enacted chivalric ideals of hierarchy, charity and fortitude in terms of processions, banquets and tournaments, it also simultaneously embodied the commercial ideals of wealth production and consumption through the display of material goods that realized princely magnificence. Or in terms that a Burgundian courtier would have recognized, what Alexander attained by the bounty of conquest, Charles attained by the fruit of commerce.

IV.

This understanding of court culture as a practice and performance of magnificence that was realized by commercial success and incorporated commercial values would only be possible and effective if it resonated beyond texts like Lannoy's, if the commercial ideals embedded in this model courtly culture were expressed elsewhere, at least among those in court circles. In this section, I argue that we can see traces of these ideas in a very different kind of text, in a series of stories and tales that circulated in the Burgundian court. These were seemingly bawdy and absurd stories, written to amuse, but they offer a window into how traditional concepts of personal honor were gradually coming to reflect market values, even as they continued to be cloaked in traditional terms.

Honor, to paraphrase Marx Weber, is the social estimation of one's status connected with some quality that is common to many members.[84] By default, it was subject to the perception of the public and thus dependent on the assumptions made in a wide social arena. In this sense, it was not a fixed measure, and it had to be continuously performed and affirmed. Honor, as contemporaries knew so well, was at once a potent and an elusive 'thing' that could be 'credited' and 'debited' – it was constantly negotiated.[85]

This unstable nature of honor was more acute in the Burgundian realm of the mid-fifteenth century, a period of social mobility that put new actors in play and shifted hierarchies that had once seemed more stable. The deepening commercialization of urban society had already morphed and refashioned traditional notions of wealth and customary rules about property that reflected the growing ascendance of the market.[86] The gradual strengthening of princely power over much of the urban landscape of the Low Countries necessitated the incorporation these urban elites into the ranks of Burgundian officials and courtiers, which in turn provided opportunities for them to ascend the ranks of social hierarchy.[87] Meanwhile, the collapse of the French royal court, the waning of the Hundred Years War and Crusades, the diminishing returns of feudal revenue, and the move of the

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[84] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischoff, (University of California Press, 1978), 932.

[85] James R. Farr, "Honor, Law, and Custom in the Renaissance," in *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance*, ed. Guido Ruggiero (Oxford, 2002), 126.

[86] Martha C. Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism in Europe, 1300-1600* (Cambridge, 2010), 49-92.

[87] Jan Dumolyn, "Nobles, Patricians and Officers: The Making of a Regional Political Elite in Late Medieval Flanders," *Journal of Social History* 40 (2006) : 431–452 ; Dumoyln, *Staatsvorming en vorstelijke ambtenaren in het graafschap Vlaanderen 1419-1477* (Antwerp, 2003); John Bartier, *Légistes et gens de finances au XVième siècle: les conseillers des ducs de Bourgogne Philippe Le Bon et Charles le Téméraire*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1952-1955).

center of gravity of the Burgundian realm from "the lands there" (duchy and county of Burgundy) to "the lands here" (county of Flanders and duchy of Brabant) disrupted and dislocated much of the traditional nobility.[88] At the apex of this shifting social order were the Burgundian dukes themselves, who over four generations had assiduously enlarged their territory and had themselves climbed the ranks among European princes.[89] In the course of their ascent, they had gradually appropriated royal prerogatives and had coopted urban rituals to strengthen their own authority.[90] By the time of Charles the Bold, the duke was widely perceived to be seeking the title of kingship for himself.

These socio-economic upheavals and political realignments meant that the definition or perception of honor was also in the midst of transformation. The incorporation and ascension of new men into court life, as we have already witnessed, indirectly attest to that transformation, for the traditional virtues of the valiant knight were not theirs. Hence, honor, not being a score card in a game or credit score on a file composed of fixed variables, could not be easily measured, let alone articulated. Yet as honor's source was the eyes of the beholders, we can learn something about just what constituted honor, how it was earned, and what threatened it by examining how honor's onlookers talked about the honor of others. In the case of the Burgundian court of this era, we have a rare source that depicts courtiers bantering about such incidents in their realm,

[88] Frederik Buylaert, "La noblesse et l'unification des Pays-Bas: naissance d'une noblesse bourguignonne à la fin du Moyen Âge?" *Revue Historique* 653 (2010): 3-25; Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier, *The Promised Lands: The Low Countries Under Burgundian Rule, 1369-1530* (Philadelphia, 1999), 103-40, 142.

[89] Bertrand Schnerb, *L'état Bourguignon, 1363–1477* (Paris, 1999).

[90] Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La Villes des ceremonies*.

albeit in the guise of fictionalized stories: *The Hundred New Tales* (*Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*).[91]

The Hundred New Tales was a collection of one hundred tales, which according to the dedication, were 'new' stories of events that "occurred in parts of France, Germany, England, Hainault, Brabant and other places."[92] It was titled "tales (*nouvelles nouvelles)*" in deference to "*One Hundred Tales* (*Cent Nouvelles),*" that is, the French translation of Boaccacio's *Decameron*. Like the latter, they were supposedly "recounted by" members of the ducal court as pastime, and the tales are mainly amusing anecdotes about all classes of people. Literary historians have usually dismissed the comparison with the *Decameron*, mentioning the lack of style and erudition in these stories, and have rather placed it in the medieval tradition of realistic yet comical tales (*fabliaux)*.[93] Also, while legend had it that Louis XI compiled these stories while he was dauphin and a guest at the court of Philip the Bold, literary historians have considered one of the narrators, Antoine de la Sale, was the author.[94] It has been considered at once as an inferior imitation of the *Decameron* and as the first collection of such stories in French.

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[91] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, ed. Pierre Champion (Paris, 1928). The most recent modern French edition is Roger Dubuis, *Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles* (Lyon, 1991) while the most modern English edition is Judith Diner, *The One Hundred New Tales* (*Les Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, trans. By Judith Diner (New York, 1990). Champion compares the sole surviving manuscript, MS Hunter 252 (U.4.10) at University of Glasgow, with the first print edition (1486) by Antoine Vérard preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, (Rés. Y².174, fol. Q 1v) and discovers differences in the ordering of the last two tales and a few other smaller discrepancies. Here, I cite from Champion's edition.

[92] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles,* 13.

[93] Nicolas Balachov, "Le developpement des structures narratives du fabliau a la nouvelle," in *Épopée animale, fable, fabliau* (Rouen, 1984) 29-38; Dubuis, *Les Cent,* 15-18.Georges Doutrepont, *La literature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne (*Paris, 1909), 333-6.

[94] The latest critical edition by Franklin Sweetser (1966) as well as the modern French translation by Roger Dubuis (1991) maintain Antoine de La Sale as the author. In contrast, Pierre Champion (1909)

However, recent research and further analysis of both internal and external evidence point to the *The Hundred New Tales* as a rare sampling of the various kinds of stories that were circulating within the court circa 1460 [95] – stories appropriated from earlier Latin sources as well as historical events and contemporary vernacular and oral sources. Despite the fact that several of the stories were from the *Decameron* and several more can be traced to earlier sources, the majority—two-thirds—of the tales are new and original. Fifteen stories even mention historical figures and very recent historical events, and a few of them can be corroborated by other historical records.[96]

Moreover, as judicious commentators have noticed, the *The Hundred New Tales*, unlike the *Decameron* and medieval comic tales (*fabliaux*), are striking for their lack of any pretension that these stories can be used as exempla in service of an overall moralizing

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argues against attributing authorship to La Sale, and, believing that an author with a Picardian background is more likely, proposes Philippe Pot as the author.

[95] On the dating of the work, the general consensus is that the work was compiled sometime after 1450 (based on an internal reference to the pilgrimage to Rome for the Jubilee year of 1450 in Tale 42) and before 1462 (the dedication is signed, "Dijon, 1462"). Historians have tried to narrow the date further, based on a mention of the historical figure, Sir John Talbot in Tale 5. It starts with "Monseigneur Talebot, a qui Dieu pardoint" signaling he was dead, which make it post 1453. Richard Vaughan goes further and pinpoints 1459-1461 based on Tale 53, which recounts a mismatched marriage in Brussels, which Vaughan corroborates with an account of a similar case in the *Chronicles* of George Chastellain, dated to a Sunday during Lent in 1459. I can further narrow the date here: it was most likely written before May 1461. The largest number of stories (15 in total) are ascribed to "Monseigneur de la Roche" who was then Philippe Pot. He was knighted in 1451, and became a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece in the chapter meeting of 1461, a fact that the author of the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles* fails to mention. Yet in Tale 14, ascribed to Jean de Crequy, the author makes a point of mentioning him as "a Knight of the Order" (Jean de Crequi was a founding member of the Order in 1430). It can be construed that at the moment the Tales were told and recorded, Philippe Pot was not yet a knight of the Order, and thus it was compiled before 1461. Therefore, the dating of the telling the stories can be narrowed to between Lent, 1459 and May 1461.

[96] Tales 5, 16, 24, 25, 27, 42, 47, 55, 62, 63, 69, 74, 75, 87, 89. Champion, xiii-l, provides an extensive examination of the authors, often citing archival documents. I can add that in the case of Tale 63, it seems to be related to a transaction in Antwerp, September 1452, recorded in the AD Nord, B. 3661, fol. 69v. See also above, Chapter 2.

intent.[97] Other than the dedication, the "author (*l'acteur*)" exercises no editorial authority, leaving no comments about the individual tales or an overarching epilogue at the end. He seems content to merely be a compiler. Each individual story was "recounted by (*compté par*)" a narrator, and though the supposed authors often mention how they heard the story or why they leave names anonymous, they do not offer any lesson at the end, nor are there any debates between the narrators of each tale.[98] On each level of authorship, the tendency is to avoid any narrative intervention for moralizing and literary pretensions.

Furthermore, the tales exhibit a story-telling style that accentuates the realistic rather than the comical. Some commenters have mentioned that the overall structure of bringing together fragmented and anecdotal stories resembles contemporary chronicles. However, Burgundian chronicles dealing with the high and powerful have a narrative style that borders on theatrical, by seeking to mold the historical figures into models of chivalric and Christian virtue.[99] Conversely, the stories in the *The Hundred New Tales* emphasize that they are true stories. The dedication claims that they are "events (*advenues*)" that occurred within the Burgundian realms, and the tales themselves often provide names of persons and places to add an allure of veracity. The narrators often claim that they heard

[97] *Tales*, trans. Diner, xix-xxi. Diner, "The Courtly-Comic Style of *Les Cent nouvelles nouvelles*," *Romance Philology* 47 (1993), 48-60 also emphasizes the stylistic subvergence that is going on in the stories. A tale that seems to have the structure of a courtly love story or a pastorelle is subverted into a comic mode, surprising the conventions of the genre and the expectation of the reader.

[98] The narrators are often named, and almost all of them can be identified as historical figures: from high ranking nobles such as Philip Croy, lord of Quievrain, to low level courtiers such as Philip Viller, a squire. Also included among the narrators is Jean de Lannoy, the younger brother of Gullibert and Hugues de Lannoy. All are known figures from the Burgundian court, though none, other than Antoine de Sale, has any literary renown.

[99] The *Chronicles* of George Chastellain and their colorful portrait of Philip the Good and his courtiers are a prime example.

the stories themselves; in one case the narrator tells a story of himself.[100] Though not all tales concern actual historical events, they all purport to be real stories that happened nearby and recently. Such a framing further supports the notion that these were stories that were told and shared within the court milieu, as a plausible mirror of their world, resonant to the degree that they were deemed worthy of being put to writing.[101]

Their immediate value was most likely as light entertainment. Bawdy and lewd, as many of the stories were, they were hardly high literature and they could not be reproduced for all audiences.[102] So, historians such as Vaughan took the work as an example of the unoriginal nature of Burgundian court literature, still an imitation of French high culture.[103] Arnade casually noted the negative depiction of burghers and peasants in many of the stories, and how this reflected the bias and gulf between the court and urban circles.[104] Prevenier and Blockmans presented the stories as a precursor of vernacular Dutch culture and literature, a bridge between the Latin of the high Middle Ages and the flowering of both Latin and Dutch literature in the following decades.[105]

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[100] Tale 63, *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*,185-8.

[101] According to Pierre Champion, a manuscript edition of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* appears in the Burgundian inventories of 1467, but the dedication of the sole surviving MS Glasgow Hunter 252 is addressed to Charles the Bold, making it likely that the "1432" on the first verso is a copyist's error for 1472. J. Young and P.H. Aitken, *A catalogue of the manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1908), 202-203.

[102] As the editor of the recent modern french rendering by Rogier Dubuis (Lyon, 1991) notes in his preface.

[103] Vaughan, *Valois*, 164-6.

[104] Peter Arnade, "City, State, and Public Ritual in the Late-Medieval Burgundian Netherlands," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39:2 (1997), 307.

[105] Prevenir and Blockmans, *The Burgundian Netherlands,* 310-12; Several of the stories were probably derived from Flemish oral sources, and in turn later were translated and recorded in Dutch.

Yet the *The Hundred New Tales* are also, and perhaps better understood as, precious windows into the cultural sensibilities and social values of the era, precisely because they carry neither literary pretensions nor moral intentions and bring together a wide variety of stories, fictional and realistic. The lewd nature of the stories in particular make them exceptionally useful in terms of understanding the sense of honor that was shared by the story-tellers and the intended audience, that is, the Burgundian courtiers. Central to that conception was sex. In the late medieval and early modern era, personal honor was still intimately tied to the physical body, and was heavily gendered as a male attribute in the public realm.[106] Thus, the success and failure of men to retain control over women and female sexuality went to the heart of the question of how honor was perceived, redeemed and evaluated.[107] The many stories of marital infidelity, such as cuckolding wives and avenging husbands, deceptive lovers and duped spouses that are depicted in this collection offer a trove of cases helping to expose how honor was defined, lost and won – and by whom.

Taken as a whole the stories do not so much emphasize how honor is lost as how it is recovered. No social group's honor seems to be secure: not only lawyers, merchants, goldsmiths and villagers but also lords, knights, squires, gentlemen – the kind of men who were telling and listening to these stories – all are subject to being cuckolded, all are

[106] Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honor" in *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences,* vol. 6, ed. David Sills (New York, 1968), 503-11.

[107] Scott Taylor, "Honor" in *Europe 1450-1789: Encyclopedia of Early Modern World*, vol. 3, ed. Jonathan Dewald, (New York, 2004), 199-201: "male honor [was] dangerously vulnerable to the actions of women." For interesting comparable cases, see Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (New York, 1999), 103-15, 181-98.

potentially adulterers.[108] That, in itself, however, is not the fundamental cause of dishonor. Rather it is failure to recover lost honor. The first tale sets the tone by ridiculing a good citizen of Valenciennes whose wife not only deceives him by making love with a neighbor, but also makes him plea for forgiveness for having had suspicions about her – and thus without fear and or regrets continues her escapades which he never discovers.[109] Likewise, the "noble knight, rich and powerful" of Tale 16 remains unaware of his wife's infidelity and becomes an object of ridicule.[110] Such men have the names "registered in the book that has no name," that is, 'the book of Cuckolds.'[111] There is no fixed honor and dishonor, but lost honor that is not recovered is the greatest shame.

So, the crucial distinction in terms of the honor is not who loses their honor but rather who recovers honor and how. Sometimes, men who were cuckolded could be redeemed by subjecting the person who shamed them to the same shame. The third tale is a fine example. "A noble knight" in the Duchy of Burgundy tricks the wife of the miller into dishonoring herself and her husband by sleeping with him. The miller, having found out, gives no outward sign, but succeeds in tricking the lady of the knight into sleeping with him and thus dishonoring the knight just as he was dishonored. On hearing this, the knight reflected that "the miller had repaid him well" and suggests that the miller "say

[108] Conversely, there are also incidents of women who successfullu defend and keep their honor by tricking their suitor. For example, Tales 9, 17, 24.

[109] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles,* 15-8.

[110] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles,* 53-55.

[111] Tale 27: *Cent nouvelles nouvelles,* 87-91: "*ou livre qui n'a point de nom*."

nothing about me, and I will say nothing about you."[112] Shame is mutually cancelled, honor is restored, and the previous status quo returns. What is more noteworthy here is that in this exchange, a miller and a knight could stand on equal ground, a sign that both men, although of unequal social station, occupied the same terrain of honor at least with respect to the control of women. Further, honor, though intangible, acts like any other goods in the market: it is exchangeable and thus redeemable. Yet, not all cases would allow revenge by exacting the same shame, and so the varied means of restoring honor gain importance.

Following this logic, the degree of honor lost or at risk can be measured by the revenge that is exacted. There were different gradations of honor, and those whose honor was the most "elevated" had to exact severe punishment, usually death, on those who had besmirched that honor. Men lower down on the social ladder could restore their honor by just inflicting bodily punishment (a thrashing), or tricking the cheating spouses into submission; in other cases honor could be restored by the deprivation of property or even converted into money. Those who had neither the ability nor the means to respond would lose their honor. Here, the most interesting and informative aspect is that the fault lines function a little differently from what we may imagine.

At the top of the social world depicted in these stories were not only the grand lords and gentlemen who needed to avenge honor with death, but also great merchants who demanded the same; both, it seems, occupied the same rank at least as measured in terms

[112] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles,* 22-26. "*le musnier luy avoit baillée belle*; *tays toy de moy et si feray je de toy.*"

of how they were expected to avenge themselves for lost honor. Thus, in Tale 47, a great noble in Provence and former "president" of the Parlement has a deceitful and unfaithful wife. A servant alerts him to his wife's behavior, but being "prudent" "valiant" and "discreet", he scolds the servant who alerts him in order to protect his honor. He then plots revenge by having the mule that leads her carriage be starved and fed only salt for seven days, causing the animal to dash to the river and drown his wife as well. The dishonor of this distinguished noble was saved from public exposure and yet privately and satisfactorily avenged by death.[113] Great virtuous merchants exert similar discretion and exact similar revenge for similar assaults on their honor. In Tale 19, a merchant from London who is labeled "noble and courageous" returns home from a long journey to discover that his wife had a new son. She claims that the child was born miraculously after eating a snowflake. The merchant, "wise and prudent," pretends to believe her and plots revenge. When the child is grown, he takes him on one of his trips to Alexandria and then sells him into slavery. When the wife asks what happened, he claims that the boy who came from snow just "melted under the sun."[114] The depiction of these two figures, as

[113] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles,* 146-8.

[114] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles,* 61-63. This tale can be considered a Burgundian rendition of the well know Latin *fabliaux*, "Snow Child," which first appears in the eleventh century and is repeated in various forms through the middle ages. Jan Ziolkowski, *Fairy Tales from before Fairy Tales: The Medieval Latin Past of Wonderful* Lies (Ann Arbor, 2007), 42, 257-60. What calls our attention is the various new details that are added to this Burgundian vernacular version of the fifteenth century. The protagonist merchant is now detailed as "a temper-hearted, virtuous, courageous merchant from London, England, of good-character and wealthy" who had "a burning desire to travel to foreign lands, to have adventures, and to experience life in the world beyond his home." It also adds more details about his trade, mentioning "tin and rice" that he sold at the "port of Alexandria." These details, namely, were foremost a ploy to make the husband more upright and thus the wife's disloyalty and his revenge more out stark. But it does not hold back from the fact that they were added by the narrator to make the merchant and the wife more plausible and real to the audience. It is a favorable depiction of a long-distant merchant, who must have sounded familiar to the courtiers listening in.

both virtuous and wise men, and the similar manner in which they complete their revenge, joins them as members of the highest social rank. Honor derived from the wealth accumulated from commerce was as highly placed as honor derived from service to the duke in both arms and letters.[115]

Below them were itinerant knights – the famed heroes of earlier courtly romance – and squires as well as wealthy burgers such as merchants, goldsmiths and millers. In this group, dishonor is not avenged by murder but by equaling the score. In this arena each is left to his own devices to clear his name – by dishonoring the other in turn, by bodily punishment of the wrong-doer, or even by monetary compensation for the wrong inflicted. The husband knight in Tale 39, on discovering from his maid that his wife had cheated on him under the guise of reciting prayers, proceeds to beat her in fury.[116] In a similar manner, the industrious goldsmith in Tale 85 or the rich burghers of Malines in Tale 60 would recover their honor by enacting bodily punishment on the deceitful curate and friars.[117] The lower strata of nobles and the prosperous townsman were on similar footing. A knight close to the duke's quartermaster and a surgeon of the duke come to a settlement as in Tale 87, and as we saw in Tale 3, a miller and knight could exchange blows.[118] Most interestingly, in Tale 68, a well-born townsman of Antwerp takes revenge on his wife by

[115] The fact that the most virtuous character with the most beautiful and chaste wife in the whole collection is a mid-aged long-distance merchant in Tale 99 reinforces this favorable notion of great merchants as equals to grand lords in terms of virtue and honor. *Cent nouvelles nouvelles,* 254-65. In the first print edition by Vérard, it is this Tale that is numbered as "One Hundredth and the Last Tale."

[116] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, 94-5.

[117] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, 228-9, 175-7.

[118] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, 232-4.

depriving her of all her goods. When he discovers her disloyalty, rather than give her a thrashing in rage or even secretly plotting her death, he coolly tricks her into divesting all of her silver, jewelry, as well as her draperies and dresses and petticoats, until she was left only in her underskirt."[119] The "good merchant" of Arras in Tale 49 redresses his dishonor by forcing his wife, who is caught confessing to her lover that all of her body belonged to him except her behind, to put on a robe in front of her family to display her infidelity: it was made of "coarse wool (*gros bureau gris*)" except for the behind which was made of "fine red cloth (*bonne escarlate*)."[120] In these tales, honor could be restored literally and symbolically by property, especially textiles.

Once we move lower down on the social ladder, we encounter people who had different and often insufficient means to protect their honor. The small shopkeeper, the peddling traders, the poor and dimwitted villagers were often unaware that their control over their women, and thus their honor, had been lost. They would live ignorantly in dishonor, gossiped about by others. Or, when they did realize what had happened, they neither had the "courage" nor the "cunning" to restore their honor. For instance, in the Tale 4, the poor shopkeeper, who on hearing about the constant suitor of his wife, meant to confront him at the moment of the act, but conversely was cowed by the suitor's huge lance. In the end, he would be condemned by his wife for not having "enough courage to

[119] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, 196-7. The wife loses her "*argent, ses verges, sese tixus, auch bourses estoffée bein richement, ung grand tas de couvrechefs bien fins, pluseurs pennes entieres et de tresbonne valeur, bref, tout ce qu'elle avoit … se desarma de sa robe et de sa cotte simple, et demoura en chemise*"

[120] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*,150-2.

undertake the defense of the wife in whom your good and honor resides."[121] Even when such figures sought to restore their honor through material compensation, it turns comical, as in Tale 43. Here, a "laborer and dealer" from Lille who was "not very rich" but "covetous, and strongly desired to gain money" one day discovers his wife with another fellow. The tradesman swears to kill him, but he pleads for mercy, promising six bushels of wheat. The tradesman demands twelve, the wife negotiates for eight, the husband refuses, the lover asks for a delayed installment, and they agree on two installments, "six on the next day, and the other on St. Rémy's day."[122] An act of avenging dishonor takes on the dealings of a market transaction, and the parties arrive at a negotiated settlement. In the lowest stratum of society, a man's honor was not only commensurable with money, but it was negotiable and measurable in sums.

We see here an honor system that was not only being destabilized but also reconstituted by the gradual permeation of commerce. Wealth made from international trade could grant a man honor that was not unlike the honor accorded men of noble pedigree. The wealth of townsmen, both as merchants and artisans and clerks, would cause their honor to be taken as seriously as that of squires, knights and gentlemen, and could be redeemed by material goods. The details in Tale 62 casually reflect these sentiment: two competing lovers, a squire and a cupbearerer, mingle in the company of "gentlemen and merchants and all together go for lunch," while the host, who is

[121] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, 26-9. " *n'avez eu tant de courage que d'entreprendre la defence de celle ou gist tout vostre bien et honneur.* "

[122] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, 137-8.

dishonored by them, gets to keep a diamond in return.[123] Whereas the traditional honor of knights, as far as the stories tell, was merely left to a 'manliness' that sometimes underpinned their success in seducing ladies or maids (but even then, they were not immune from being subject to revenge or being duped in turn), the newly gained honor of townsmen reflected in the tales shows that wealth created through the market place was commanding respect and making possible more honor. And, most radically, more and more a price could be put on honor. Honor was like a 'good' in the marketplace, and that meant wealth could make it rise or fall.

The honor system depicted in *The Hundred New Tales*, at once undermined yet underpinned by commercial wealth, was not as fictitious as it may sound. The multitude of wedding records and invitations surviving from the era attest to a marriage market in which the lack of honor of one party could be compensated for by the wealth that that party would bring to the marriage. [124] And this new honor would be reinforced through the public presentation of the newly weds' combined splendor. Often the widow who succeeded to a commercial fortune would be considered a prime spouse for an up-and-coming courtier, and the high councilors around the duke would try to secure such a woman's hand to reward their loyal underlings. Such anecdotes already exist in the tales; they are more explicit in the historical records. The Burgundian dukes were the final

[123] *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, 180-5.

[124] Werner Paravicini ed., *Invitations au mariage: Pratique sociale, abus de pouvoir, intérêt de l'Etat à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne, 1399–1489* (Stuttgart, 2001); On the reproduction of the nobility via marriage with wealthy urban families see E. Bousmar, "Des alliances liées à la procréation: Les fonctions du mariage dans les Pays-Bas bourguignons," *Mediaevistik* 8 (1994), 11-69.

sponsors and arbiters of such weddings and ultimately the best practitioners: their far-flung realm was practically built up on the dowry of their marriages.[125]

These stories, real and fictional, reveal a courtly and urban world in which commerce and the wealth it generated was a public and substantial element of one's standing in society. Honor itself, traditionally the preserve of a noble elite defined by a claim to military expertise, was not immune from commercial wealth. Not only could honor bring in men of commercial wealth, now commercial wealth could confer honor. The great merchant was as honorable as the grand noble, while the gentleman was as vulnerable as the townsman. The charm and bravado of the knights were matched by the cool and cunning of the merchant. Together, these stories reflect a society in which generating and expending commercial wealth was receiving acceptance, and the values and skills of market exchange were gaining currency in a metaphoric as well as material sense.

V.

An anonymous English herald, reporting on the wedding ceremonies of the Charles the Bold and Margaret of York, marveling at the riches on display, would proclaim that he had never seen "so great riches in so little space."[126] We have long known that the 'splendor' of the Burgundian court was made possible by commercial wealth, but there is more to that story. The commercial operations of the court made it, in effect, a business – every bit as

[125] Armstrong, "La Politique Matrimoniale;" Schnerb, *Etat*, 197-227.

[126] *Excerpta Historica*, *or, Illustrations of English history,* ed. Samuel Bently, (London, 1831), 236.

much a business as the Hansa Kontor, and as a business it gradually absorbed and came to articulate the values of the market. These would be manifest during the public presentations of the court, of which the wedding was a prime occasion. The princely magnificence projected in these court ceremonies would at once enact the chivalric ideals of an imagined past, embody the commercial virtues that commanded the future, and thereby project and legitimize the rule of the Valois dukes over their urban and commercial terrain. This was possible because, even honor itself, once so clearly tied to martial virtues and feudal ideals, was now "commercialized," not only negotiated in terms startlingly like market terms but also fluid enough a concept to place the very richest merchant at the level of the prince's highest courtier, the prosperous townsman at the level of the knight, and the small shopkeeper or artisan among the lower orders of traditional society. The world of the Burgundian court was at once an imaginary world of chivalry and a burgeoning world of commerce.

Chapter 5. Epilogue

Court and Commerce at the End of the Burgundian Era

I.

On the fifth day of the year 1477, Duke Charles the Bold met his death on the battlefield in the vicinity of Nancy, Lorraine.[1] His army had been outnumbered and outflanked by the allied forces of the duke of Lorraine, the bishops of Basel and Strasbourg, and the Swiss Confederacy, and most of his entourage were either captured or killed in the frantic flight that followed.[2] His death was a catastrophic result for the Burgundian realm, as Charles had not left a male heir behind to succeed him and his subjects had already been exhausted by four years of continuous war.[3] The now dowager duchess Margaret of York and the

[1] The Battle of Nancy occurred in the aftermath of two previous disastrous defeats in the Battles of Grandson and Murten in 1476. The successive defeats of the Burgundian army at the hands of the combined forces of the Swiss Confederation have been considered by the Swiss as foundational moment in their national history and was commemorated by a collection of scholarly articles in *Cinq-centième anniversaire de la bataille de Nancy* (Nancy, 1979). The battles are also cited as a pivotal moment in the "military revolution" of the late fifteenth century: Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 1988), 7, 16-17. Charles the Bold himself met an terrible death: his body stripped of clothes and jewels, his head split open by the arrow that struck him, his face savaged by wolves – the corpse was only discovered three days later still buried in the snow, barely identified by the body scars from his youth.

[2] Charles had already lost many of his men as well as his treasure in the previous battles, and much of the material artifacts of the splendor of the Burgundian court that remain today were actually bounty captured by the Swiss in the three battles. Thus the 2010 exhibition, "Splendor of Burgundy" was jointly organized by the Historisches Museum Berne as well as the Bruggemuseum and Groeningemuseum Bruges, and the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna.

[3] On receiving news of the death of the Charles the Bold, Louis XI of France launched an invasion of the ancestral "lands thither" of Duchy of Burgundy, as well as the borderland areas of the Somme towns and Picardy. In doing so, Louis XI invoked the right of the crown to regain *appanages* in the

remnants of the ducal council sought to expedite the promised marriage of the Mary of Burgundy (1457-1482) to Maximilian of Habsburg (1459-1519) so as to preserve the unity and the loyalty of the subjects of the "lands hither."[4]

The Burgundian Netherlands survived only through much trial and struggle.[5] The hastily convened Estates-General of the Burgundian realm would only agree to recognize Mary of Burgundy as their overlord and her marriage to Archduke Maximilian in return for a list of concessions that undid much of the centralizing policies of Charles the Bold and

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event that there was no a male heir. Philippe Contamine, *La France aux XIVe et XVe siècles* (London, 1981), 67-78. The more recently acquired territories such as the Duchy of Guelders and the Bishopric of Liege also revolted and regained their independence. Blockmans and Prevenier, *The Promised Lands*, 193-5.

[4] As the presumptive heiress of the Burgundian realm, Mary of Burgundy was eagerly sought by the princes of Europe. The marriage with Maximilian of Habsburg had been in discussion since the early 1470s when Charles the Bold was seeking a crown from Emperor Frederick, but it was only in 1476 when Charles had already been weakened by a series of military setbacks that the marriage was finally agreed upon. The death of Charles in 1477 placed the marriage plans in jeopardy, and several other suitors, including Charles, dauphine of France, were aggressively presented. But the dowager duchess Margaret of York and the high nobles who assumed power after the death of Duke Charles sought to pursue the marriage with Maximilian, in order to protect the Low Countries from takeover by the French crown. Popular legend has it that the tradition of an engagement ring began with Maximilian presenting one to Mary, though I have not found any contemporary sources to confirm the story. Conversely, there is little doubt that the main attraction of Mary for Frederick and Maximilian was the great wealth to be derived from the Burgundian realms. The chief negotiators, Georg von Baden, bishop of Metz and Cardinal Georg Hesler persuaded Frederik III and Maximilian by stating that the annual revenues from the Burgundian realms were estimated to be over a million florins.

[5] Traditionally, in French historiography, the death of the Charles the Bold in 1477 has been considered the cut-off date of the "Burgundian era." However, as Walter Prevenier and Wim Blockmans persuasively argued in the introduction to their *De Bourgondische Nederlanden* (Antwerpen, 1983), the princes and the people of the greater Low Countries continued to consider themselves "Burgundian." The continued use of the title of "Duchess/Duke of Burgundy" after the loss of Burgundy proper, the naming of the heirs Philip and Charles, despite the break of the male line, as well as the economic and cultural continuity in the greater Low Countries justify the title. On the other hand, Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic, 1477-1806* (Oxford, 1995), 1-40 argues that despite the political and linguistic unity under the Burgundians, the Northern provinces took divergent paths and had different interests from the Southern ones, and the subsequent division during the Dutch revolt was a natural development.

affirmed the separate privileges of the various principalities, the Great Privileges of 1477.[6] Maximilian would seek overturn those privileges as soon as he arrived in the Netherlands, while attempting not only to repel the French but also to regain from them his lost dynastic lands – both aims not shared by the Estates-General. Thus, the ongoing war with France, the simmering conflict between the archduke and the cities, the sudden death of Mary in 1482, and the subsequent revolt of the major cities of Flanders and Brabant would leave the Low Countries in a continuous state of strife.[7] Only with the pacification of Ghent in 1492, the Treaty of Senlis between Charles VIII of France and Maximilian of Austria in 1493, and the majority of Philip the Fair (1479-1506) in 1494, was the Burgundian Netherlands able to return to its former peace and prosperity.

In these times of trouble, the scale and splendor of the Burgundian court was greatly diminished. This period of near continuous civil-war in the Burgundian Netherlands has also left fewer records, making it more difficult to trace the operations and

[6] On the significance of these privileges, which Wim Blockmans calls "the first constitution of the Netherlands" see his "La signification 'constitutionnelle' des privileges de Marie de Bourgogne (1477)" in ed. W. Blockmans, *Het Algemene en de gewestelijke privilegien van Maria van Bourgondië voor de Nederlanden: 1477* (Kortrijk, 1985), 495-516. The major consequence of these privileges was the effective dismantling of all the central organs of state instituted by Charles the Bold, such as the *Parlement de Malines* and the *Chambre de Comptes à Malines*, and the various restrictions placed on the prince in exercising his power. This included a ban on non-natives being appointed to major officers, such as a provincial governor, bailff, or fiscal officer.

[7] Christine B. Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503* (New York, 1989), Georges H. Dumont, *Marie de Bourgogne* (Paris, 1982), Jean-Marie Cauchies, *Philippe le Beau. Le dernier Duc de Bourgogne* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003) provide an overview of this period. Weightman, *Margaret* is especially useful in providing insight into the crucial role of the "Duchess Mère du Bourgogne" in stabilizing the Burgundian Netherlands. On the conflict between the archduke Maximilian, the cities and the nobility, see Jelle Haemers, *For the Common Good: State Power and Urban Revolts in the Reign of Mary of Burgundy* (Turnhout, 2008) and Wim Blockmans, "Autocratie ou polyarchie? La lutte pour le pouvoir politique en Flandre de 1482 à 1492, d'après des documents inédits," *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'Histoire*, 65 (1974): 257-368.

aspirations of the Burgundian court during its turn to the sixteenth century. Yet it was also during this era of transition that the court gradually settled into the city of Mechelen, midway between Brussels and Antwerp, and the new currents of humanist learning, Renaissance architecture and overseas trade with the East and West Indies made their mark on the Low Countries. It also set the stage for the revival of Burgundian-Habsburg fame, epitomized in the central role Charles, son of Philip the Fair – named after his great-grandfather, Charles the Bold – would take in European affairs in the sixteenth century.[8] Thus, it is useful to track the operations of the Burgundian court in the aftermath of the death of Charles the Bold, and trace its changes and continuities.

Here, I first examine how organization of the Burgundian court changed as it underwent a difficult dynastic succession and internal turmoil. The imposition of a foreign prince and the conflict with the nobility and cities caused continuous revisions in the structure and personnel of the court. Yet despite these changes and troubles, the figures who played a crucial role in the commercial workings of the Burgundian court were able to leverage their skills and connections to attain social mobility during this period. Also, by the time the court settled and stabilized around the 1490s, the organization, personnel, and characteristics of the court of Philip the Fair exhibited strong similarities to those of the earlier court of Charles the Bold, albeit on a smaller scale. Though the personnel and patterns had changed, the reconstituted court mobilized the mercantile expertise of court

[8] Among the numerous works on Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, two recent publications, James D. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War: Campaign strategy, International Finance, and Domestic Politics* (Cambridge, 2002) and Wim Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V: 1500-1558* (New York, 2002), provide insight into the Burgundian legacy that Charles himself cherished.

officials and harnessed the commercial skill of merchants and artisans in its quest to regain its former glory.

II.

The court of Charles the Bold collapsed at the Battle of Nancy. Not only did many of his entourage perish, but even those who survived, such as Olivier de La Marche, were delayed in their return to the Netherlands, as they were held captive until their ransoms were paid.[9] Many also switched their allegiance to Louis XI of France, including Charles half-brother and First Chamberlain, Anthony of Burgundy, either because they held extensive fiefs and interests in areas that fell under French control or because they sought the protection of a new overlord in these tumultuous times. A few confidants of the late duke who remained, such as the Chancellor Guillaume Hugonet and Guy de Brimeu, lord of Humbercourt, were made scapegoats for the contentious policies of the late duke and met their death on scaffold.[10] Thus the remaining Burgundian courtiers, especially native nobles, such as Louis de Bruges, lord of Gruuthuse and Adolf de Cleve, lord of Ravenstein, who had been entrusted with counseling the duchess while Charles was away on the battlefields, urgently sought to reorganize the court for Mary of Burgundy.

[9] La Marche, *Memoires III*, 240-42.

[10] Marc Boone, "La justice en spectacle. La justice urbaine en Flandre et la crise du pouvoir "bourguignon," 1477-1488", *Revue Historique* 308(2003): 49-59.

In terms of the organization of the court, it underwent several restructurings during this period. After the death of Charles was confirmed, a new ordinance was issued in March 1477 for the establishment of the court of Mary of Burgundy.[11] Then again, in November, after the arrival of Maximilian in the Burgundian Netherlands, another court ordinance was promulgated to constitute a new ducal chamber for the archduke.[12] In both cases, the surviving documents are copies from the sixteenth century, not the original ordinances, and the details do not provide a full picture of the court structure. The first was probably drawn up by Adolf, lord of Ravenstein, who stepped in as a guardian of the young duchess, while a confidant of the late duke, Louis, lord of Gruuthuse, was named "knight of honor and first chamberlain" of Mary of Burgundy.[13] Issued after the Great Privileges had gutted the power of the ducal court, its main concern was to halt the possible exodus of courtiers who remained by providing them with a position and pension from the ducal court.[14] This probably was the reason behind the lack of details in the surviving copy. The second, which established the court of Maximilian for the Burgundian Netherlands, was purportedly recorded by Olivier de la Marche. It names the various Burgundian elites who were appointed to the ceremonial offices of the court, and details the monetary compensations they were to receive for attendance in the court.[15] It echoes

[11] Hans Cool, *Mannen met macht: edellieden en de moderne staat in de Bourgondisch-Habsburgse landen* (1475-1530), 108. The original has been lost, though a copy is conserved in Rijksarchief te Gent, Raad van Vlaanderen, nr. 34323.

[12] The ordinance is edited in M. Gachard, *Analectes historiques*, vol. 5 (Brussels, 1859), 15-25.

[13] Hans Cool, *Mannen met macht*, 109-10.

[14] Haemer, *For the Common Good*, 106.

[15] Gachard, *Analectes*, 15-25.

the hierarchical structure of earlier court ordinances, with daily wages (*escroes*) from 36 shillings down to 6 shillings, but doesn't contain clauses for rotation (*par terme*) characteristic of the Burgundian court. Furthermore, the officers of the ducal household such as the keepers, valets and aides are only sparsely listed, and it make no mention of either a First Steward or a Stablemaster. It is difficult to discern whether the ducal chamber and stable had shrunk drastically, or whether they were just omitted.[16] Rather than detail the structure or operations of the new court, the purpose of issuing and recording theses ordinances seems to have been retaining the loyalty of the Burgundian elites.

A slightly clearer picture starts to appear from the court ordinance of 1482. By this time, Maximilian had successfully defeated the French forces in the Battle of Guinegate (1479) and consolidated his rule over the Burgundian Netherlands. Unfortunately, a copy of the ordinance does not remain, but there are other documents that record the resentment stirred by news that the archduke was planning to appoint several "parvenus" and favorites to high positions within the court.[17] Maximilian's intent to reorganize the court and name several new figures to the court reflects his growing confidence about his position in the Netherlands and his will to promote those who were beholden to himself, at the expense of the traditional elites who had their own bases of power. Maximilian sought to elevate functionaries who had first risen up the Burgundian hierarchy under Charles the Bold and

[16] Gachard, *Analectes,* 20-21. The organization of the ducal chamber was probably not considered worth copying when the records were made decades after their promulgation.

[17] Haemers, *For the Common Good*, 126-29.

then successfully executed his will during his reign, such as Pieter Lanchal, or draw from the mercantile elites of Bruges who were his main supporters during this era, such as Willem Moreel.[18]

But the sudden death of Mary in March of that year forestalled the implementation of the court ordinance and kept the court in turmoil. Just at the moment when Maximilian seemed ready to take greater control, he and his Netherlandish subjects became embroiled in a decade long civil war over the control of the regency of her infant heir, Philip the Fair. On her deathbed, Mary had appointed Maximilian as regent of their young son, but the original marriage contract of 1477 stipulated that Maximilian could not inherit from Mary if they had children.[19] Based on this clause, the nobility and urban elites of Flanders together created a separate regency council that assumed all the prerogatives of ducal power. The Flemish cities, especially Ghent and Bruges had taken the lead; they were later joined by Brabantine cities such as Brussels and Louvain. Thus, there were effectively two councils of state ruling the Netherlands, and Maximilian was only able to restore his

[18] Pieter Lanchals' elevation was particularly spectacular. He was from a middlings sort family in Bruges, who participated in the cloth trade, but not a member of the urban patriciate. His first foot in the Burgundian court was as a clerk to Gilbert Ruple, the first *argentier* of Charles the Bold. He was named to the ducal financial commission and implemented various policies to raise more revenue to finance Maximilian's wars, notably, the sale of offices. His fall was equally spectacular. During the revolt of Bruges in 1488, Lanchal was captured and beheaded in the sight of Maximilian who was then also held captive by the Bruges rebels. Marc Boone, "Pieter Lanchals," *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek,* vol.13 (Brussels, 1990): 471-480. Willem Moreel was a member of the Bruges mercantile elite, and had enmeshed in the trade of luxury goods with Italian and Hanse merchants. He would leverage his service for Maximilian to become a burgermeester of Bruges. Yet contrary to the fate of Pieter Lanchal, his closeness to the Bruges elite led him to side with the rebels during the revolt of Bruges in 1488. Jelle Hamers, "Willem Moreel," *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek,* vol. 18 (Brussels, 2007): 681-89.

[19] Maximilian, with Mary and Margaret's consent, but without consultation with the Estates general, had amended the original marriage contract after his arrival, thus opening its interpretation to debate. Weightman, *Margaret*, 115.

authority after gradually reconquering each city, one by one.[20] This civil war was compounded by high grain prices and the recurrence of the plague, making it one of the most devastating decades of the fifteenth century.[21] It was only in 1492 that internal peace was restored at great cost. The structure of the court is uncertain during this period of civil war.[22]

The surviving fiscal accounts of the period, however, provide a partial picture of the organization and operations of the court. Soon after the death of Charles the Bold, as part of the Great Privileges, the Estates-General demanded the decentralization of finances, undoing much of the reforms of Charles the Bold. As a consequence, the office of the treasurer (*argentier*) was abolished, and we no longer have such detailed and centralized records of court expenditures. Soon after his arrival in the Netherlands, Maximilian set about to wrest control of the finances from the Estates-General and concentrate them again in his hands, setting up a financial commission led by a superintendent (*superintendent des finances*).[23] Directly subordinate to the financial commission, a receiver-general (*receveur général*) was in charge of recording all the revenues as well as all the expenditures, thus

[20] The contours of the civil strife were actually much more complicated, with the regency council in Flanders being dissolved and reconstituted, separate revolts flaring up in Utrecht and Liège, French invasions before and after the death of Louis XI in 1483, Bruges and Brussels switching allegiance, and Maximilian obliged to return to Austria for other dynastic priorities.

[21] Prevenier and Blockmans, *The Burgundian Netherlands*, 39-40 document the demographic devastation. The high grain prices coincided with the phases of export restrictions in the Baltic countries (ibid., 67).

[22] The restructuring of the court after the civil war will be covered in section IV below.

[23] Hamers, *For the Common Good*, 33-34.

subsuming the role of the previous treasurer. [24] Under this new system, the accounts of the receiver-general recorded the total amount of revenue received from various sources, as well as the total amount of expenses dispersed by various categories.

For the expenditures of the court, the accounts of the receiver-general usually recorded the total sum that was dispensed to the ducal chamber.[25] The accounts record that expenses for the operations of the ducal chamber as well as those of the duchess and later their children were "delivered to the hands" of the various officers, often Germans whom Maximilian had brought with him from Austria, and they left no record of how the expenses were spent. Likewise, an additional category of "money to my lord for his pleasure" also recorded the total sum spent, without breaking down its expenses. These, as Jeller Haemer, who analyzed the first five years of the accounts, supposes, were most likely were used to maintain "the proverbial splendor of the Burgundian court."[26] In 1480, a separate category for "the payment of Germans" was added to the ducal expenses. This category was under the charge of Adrien Andries, who was also responsible for accounting for the expenses of the ducal chamber. Without exact breakdowns, it is difficult to discern what this new German chamber was in charge of, though it seems to have covered costs for the ducal bodyguards as well as extraordinary expenses occurred by the duke. All these

[24] To a degree, this was also a return to the financial administration set up before the reforms of the Charles the Bold in which the *receveur-général de toutes les finances* kept record of both revenue and expenditure. Van Niewuenhuysen, *Les finaces du duc de Bourgogne, Philippe le Hardi, 1384-1404* (Bruxelles, 1990), 174.

[25] Haemers, *For the Common Good*, 62-67 for the following summary.|

[26] Haemers, *For the Common Good*, 62.

expenses, which previously were accounted for in detail by the ducal treasurer, were now dispersed among several officers who have left few records.

Still, the fragments of the surviving accounts do provide us a basis to glean the workings of the court during these years and recognize new features that arise during this period.[27] In some years, the expenditure records (*depenses*) of the receiver-general included payments for the "minor and major pieces (*menu et gros les parties*)" which – like the accounts of the treasurer of Charles the Bold – covered payments for textiles and silverware. Likewise, in years such as 1488 when the receiver-general, Louis Quarré, was also the Master of the Charges of the ducal chamber (*maistre de la chambre au deniers de monseigneur de Monseigneur l'archiduc*), the expenses of the ducal chamber have survived, though they are sparse in detail and do not cover every month.[28] Also, though not compiled into accounts, loose fragments of receipts (*quittances*) also survive for this period.[29] Finally, the office of the treasurer (*argentier*) was resurrected in 1487, perhaps as an administrative reform befitting the coronation of Maximilian as "King of Romans" in 1486, but only one year of the *argentier*'s accounts, 1488, has survived.[30] These accounts, combined with other records of the era, allow us to trace aspects of change and continuity in the commercial operations of the Burgundian court.

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[27] For instance, AD Nord, B. 2118, 2124, 2127, 2144, 2148, 2151, 2162, respectively for the years of 1479, 1480, 1482, 1492, 1494, 1495, 1498.

[28] AD Nord, B. 2133, 2136. These are most useful in reconstructing the itinerary of the court.

[29] For instance, AD Nord, B. 2126, 2130, 2137.

[30] Archives General du Royaume, Chambre des Comptes, nr. 1926. Despite same name, the accounts of the resurrected office of the *argentier* were records of all the extraordinary expense of the King of Romans in the Netherlands and elsewhere rather central records of the Burgundian court expenses.

III.

We may start by tracking the continuing careers of the ducal officers and court merchants and artisans who were central to the commercial operations of the court of Charles the Bold. The death of their personal lord and the arrival of a new lord with his own men meant that the personnel running the court were drastically reshuffled. This 'change of guard' meant most of the officers of the ducal chamber, and some of the merchants and artisans tied to them, were not retained. Yet, the skills and connections of these 'courtier-cum-entrepreneurs' served them well in navigating this tumultuous and transitional era.

The First Steward Jehan Le Tourneur and his family consolidated their gains in the aftermath of Nancy. Le Tourneur had already had been succeeded by Jan van Boschuyzen, his son-in-law and member of the Leiden elite, before the death of Charles the Bold.[31] His son and namesake, Jehan Le Tourneur, was also named a Steward of the duke, and would have been with the duke during his final days.[32] Though we have no record of Le Tourneur's position in the court afterwards, an ordinance of Duchess Mary records how his loyalty and service was remembered and rewarded.[33] In this undated ordinance, in return for his "good, loyal and agreeable services," the duchess provides Le Tourneur an annual

[31] See chapter 2.

[32] By 1474, the accounts named the father, "Jehan le Tourneur the older (*le vieux*)," to differentiate him from the younger son.

[33] Rijksarchief Gent, St.-Baafs en Bisdom Gent, Vreemde archieven, K2740, fol. 142v. I am grateful to Jonas Braekevelt of Ghent University for sharing with me this document.

supply of "six hundred branches (*hezelaires*)" of firewood from the forest of Soignie for Le Tourneur's hotel in Brussels.[34] This hotel, in the heart of the city, a few short steps from where the present day building of National Archives of Belgium stands, was originally owned by the Croy family but had been confiscated and bestowed on Le Tourneur by the late duke.[35] The Le Tourneur family seems to have settled themselves in the Brussels region, for by the early sixteenth century, the grandson of Jehan Le Tourneur, Guillaume, was named as an officer responsible for the maintenance of forests and rivers (*gruyer*), possibly including the one his grandfather had enjoyed firewood from.[36] Soon after, in 1540, Guillaume became lord of Sterrebeek, right on the outskirts of Brussels.[37] With his ascension to lordship, Guillaume also changed his family name to "Terneur" and joined the ranks of Brussel's notables greeting the entry of Charles V, son of Mary of Burgundy, archduke of Austria, king of Castile and by then Holy Roman Emperor.[38]

The Keeper of the Tapestries, Garnot Pourcelot, also fades from the scene after the death of Charles, but his son gained prominence in Burgundian service. His son, Jacques, also son-in-law to Jehan Le Tourneur, had used his family connections to gain training as a

[34] Ibid. In this "confirmacion d'un don de bois de chauffage," the duchess orders the "rentmaistre de Branbant ou quartier de Bruxelles" is charged with delivering the firewood. The forest of Soignie is approximately 25 miles southwest of Brussels.

[35] Alexandre Henne and Alphonse Wauters, *Histoire de la ville de Bruxelles,* vol. 3 (Brussels, 1845), 177.

[36] Henne and Walters, *Histoire,* 272.

[37] Jean Bartier, *Légistes et gens de finances au XVe siècle* (Brussels, 1955), 53, n. 2.

[38] Henne and Walters, *Histoire*, 408, 410. In 1545, he was appointed an *amman*, that is, an officer who "presided over the corps of the magistrate as a direct representative of the prince." Their main role was leading the procession of troops in public ceremonies, the most famous being the *Ommegang* held for the entry of Emperor Charles V in 1549, reenacted each year in Brussels.

clerk in the Chamber of Accounts in Lille.[39] He became a receiver of extraordinary taxes (*aides*) from the cities of Lille, Douai, and Orchies.[40] In August 1477, Mary of Burgundy reconfirmed him as one of the "masters (*maistre*)" of accounts at the Chamber in Lille, even though he was considered a "foreigner" and thus not eligible for the post under the terms of the Great Privileges. He was provided the substantial sum of 400 pounds in 1479 in return for his services, but died soon thereafter in 1481.[41] Still, Pourcelot's family had ascended the ranks from merchant suppliers to minor court officers to fiscal officers of the realm.

The Keeper of the Jewels, Charles de Visen, also retreats from the ducal court after its demise in 1477. A native of the County of Burgundy and son of a fiscal officer, Charles de Visen had risen through the court hierarchy, serving as valet of the chamber, ducal Steward, Keeper of the Minor Jewels, and then Keeper of the Jewels, succeeding Jacques de Bregilles, who had served in that role since the time of Philip the Good. His proximity to Charles the Bold, and his responsibility for both ducal treasures and private funds, may have decided the loss of his position, if not his life, when the ducal treasures were ransacked in the military defeats of 1477.[42] Still, both the Bregilles and de Visen families

[39] Pierre Cockshaw, *Le personnel de la chancellerie de Bourgogne-Flandre sous les ducs de Bourgogne de la Maison de Valois: 1384-1477* (Brussels, 1982), 109.

[40] Jean Mireille, *La Chambre des Comptes de Lille, 1477-1667* (Paris, 1992), 334.

[41] Jelle Hamers, ""Ende hevet tvolc goede cause jeghens hemlieden te rysene:" Stedelijke opstanden en staatsvorming in het graafschap Vlaanderen (1477-1492)," (Ph. D. diss., University of Ghent, 2006), 1653.

[42] Furthermore, in the aftermath of the death of the Charles, the ducal treasures stored in various residences were also ransacked by his enemies or taken charge of by other entities. For instance, the ducal treasures in the Duchy of Burgundy were seized by Louis XI and given to Georges de la Tremoille, Lord of Craon, whom he had just named governor general of Burgundy. Jean P. Namur, *Histoire des bibliothèques publiques de la Belgique*, vol. 1, (Brussels, 1840), 29-32.

seemed to have succeeded in establishing themselves in the Burgundian Netherlands. The Bregilles, like many other court officers not native to the Low Countries, settled in Brussels, with a Jacques de Bregilles, appearing as a knight, lord of Chasteaux and later a magistrate (*bourgmestre*) of Brussels.[43] The de Visen family were from the county of Burgundy, which was under invasion soon after the death of Duke Charles, and temporarily annexed to France between the Treaty of Arras (1482) and Treaty of Senlis (1493).[44] This may have forced Charles de Visen to return to the County to protect his possessions, but if we follow the recent research of art historians, he retained his fame and fortune to have his portrait drawn by none other than Hans Memling.[45]

The Stablemaster, Jehan de Rochefay, as the chief officer in charge of provisioning the personal troops of the duke, seems to have shared the fate of his duke on the battlefield of Nancy. We have no surviving record of him from the late 1470s, but his son Simon de Rochefy is confirmed as the bailiff of Berghes Saint-Wynnoc, a position his father had held before entering the court.[46] Berghes Saint-Wynnoc was a fief inland from Dunkirk, and thus an area that was bore the brunt of the war in the 1480s between the forces of

[43] Bartier, *Légistes et Gens*, 53, n.1.

[44] The County of Burgundy was placed under the rule of Louis XI, as the dowry of Margaret, daughter of Mary and Maximilian, at the time of her marriage to the dauphin Charles in the following year. Margaret and Charles were respectively 3 and 13 years old. The county returned to Burgundian-Hapsburg hands when Charles VIII unilaterally disavowed the marriage and wed Anne of Brittany, to consolidate his claim over the Duchy of Brittany.

[45] Till Borchert, *Memling's Portraits* (Ghent, 2005), 54, 171.

[46] Jan Van Rompaey, *Het grafelijk baljuwsambt in Vlaanderen tijdens de Boergondische periode* (Bruxelles, 1967), 398; M. Brun-Lavainne, "Analyse d'un compte de dépense de la maison du duc Charles de Bourgogne," *Bulletin de la Commission Historique du Département du Nord*, vol. 8, (Lille, 1865), 220.

Louis XI on the one hand and those of Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian of Habsburg on the other. The lack of remaining mention of the Rochefay family in the Burgundian sources probably points to the reality that many nobles and officers with major bases in regions overrun by the forces of Louis XI had little choice but to switch allegiance to the French crown.[47] Also, Jehan de Rochefay was likely a member of the patronage network of John, lord of Auxy, and Philipe de Crèvecoeur, lord of Esquerdes, who both went over the French side after 1477.[48]

The demise of the ducal chamber of Charles the Bold and the change of personnel also affected the merchants following the court and the artisans appointed as valets of the chamber who were personally tied to the late duke. In the case of court merchants, the designation "merchant following the court" no longer appears in the accounts, probably a reflection of the decreased demand and weakened power of the court. Still, the Langle brothers retained their ties to the ducal court, with Jean serving as Warden of the ducal residence in Ghent, and Hacquinet appearing as a financial officer of Maximilian.[49] They were probably released from being factors of the Keeper of the Tapestries and expanded

[47] Hans Cool, *Man met Macht*, 153 mentions a Josine de Gryspere who was wed to Simon de Rochefay and then Jan van Pouke, before she was finally wed to Nicolaas van Avelus in 1480. Cool notes that Jan van Pouke was beheaded by the Gentenaars during their revolt in 1478, but does not describe the circumstances of her separation with Simon de Rochefay. If the latter went over to the French side as I have conjectured, and the family of Josine de Gryspere remained in the Burgundian service, it may have made the marriage untenable, leading to her marriage to Jan van Poucke.

[48] Though patronage networks are hard to discern, during the jousts celebrating the marriage of Charles and Margaret in 1468, Jehan de Rochefay participated as a member of Lord of Auxy and Philipe de Crèvecoeur's team.

[49] The later careers of the Langle brothers, Jean Nyvart, Jehan de Houppelins and the Feron family below are summarized from chapter 3. There is a Jean de Houppelins who appears as a *huissier d'armes*, but I have been unable to identify his relationship to the draperies merchant Jehan.

their business beyond supplying the court. Eventually, the Langle brother successfully planted themselves in Ghent, the base of their operations, to join the ranks of nobility. Jean Nyvart and Jehan de Houppelines remained suppliers to the court, though no longer able to enjoy the designation "merchants following the court," and their later career's are not quite clear. Jehan and Pierre Feron, who were not yet major suppliers in the early 1470s, appear to have returned to their previous expertise as tailors. In a rare private account of 1479, Jehan Feron is recorded as a "tailor residing in Ghent."[50] He is supplying "several pieces made by him and clothing for the said lady" to the widow of Guillaume Hugonet, the chancellor of Burgundy, who was executed soon after the death of Charles the Bold.[51] The relationship that the Ferons, as court-merchants, had built with high level courtiers continued even after the death of their lord and his confidant, and probably helped them join the ranks of nobility.[52]

The various artisans designated as "valets of the chamber" also evidence continuity as well as some scaling down and loosening of ties. The workshop in Bruges continued to be managed by Pierre Coustain, who was now named "valet of the chamber and painter to the duchess." We witness him receiving steady work in 1481.[53] But there are no records of the ducal painter Jehan Hennequart running the workshop in Brussels, and it is unknown

[50] Véronique Flammang, "Compte de tutelle de Loyse de Layé, veuve du chancelier Hugonet - 1479," *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire* 169 (2003): 51-162, 141.

[51] On Guillaume Hugonet, see above, section I and footnote 11.

[52] See chapter 3, n. 67.

[53] AD Nord, B 2113, "*Quittance de Pierre Coustain, valet de chambre et peintre de la duchess;*" AD Nord, B. 2124, f.273, 289, 293 record various standards, guidons, and pieces supplied by Coustain for the chapter meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece that year.

what happened to him after 1477. With much of the realm embroiled in foreign and then civil war, the scale of demand from the court would not have been as massive as it was under Charles the Bold. In the case of the ducal silversmith Gerard Loyet, he no longer seems to be managing the workshop in Brussels and was no longer designated a "valet of the chamber." After 1477, there are no more records of silverware purchases from him.[54] However, as we shall see below, he continued and expanded in his role as "Master of the Mint," and he ascended to the rank of councilor before his death.[55] Though it is not possible to reconstruct the whole picture, it seems that the diminished court had fewer designated artisans and rather relied on ad hoc purchases from various suppliers.

Overall, during the period of upheaval following the death of Charles the Bold, many court officers of the ducal chamber were able to mobilize their resources and connections to settle in the cities of the Burgundian Netherlands and gradually join the ranks of urban elites and nobility. Their ability to navigate both the court and the market proved vital in them securing their own fortunes during these tumultuous times. Court-merchants could also build on their ties to the court and its courtiers to strengthen their businesses and ascend the social ladder, but the demise of the ducal chamber and the loss of designated and privileged status meant they were no longer carrying out the business of the court. Artisan-valets had a more uneven success, for they had to adjust to the change

[54] Hugo van der Velden, *The Donor's Image: Gerard Loyet and the Votive Portraits of Charles the Bold* (Turnhout, 2000), 25-28, also regards that he ceded marking artwork after 1477. This also supports the notion that he was the head of a workshop rather than the owner, for it is difficult to think that he would have ceased producing artwork just because orders from the court had dried up, if he owned the workshop himself.

[55] Velden, *The Donor's Image*, 27.

of court personnel, decreased and unsteady demand, and competition from new artisans seeking to supply the court. Likewise, the smaller and weaker court of Mary and Maximilian no longer demanded the scale and expertise of artisan-valets and did not have the personnel to manage their production. Manned by foreigners who came to the Low Countries with Maximilian, the court's control over merchants and artisans seems to have diminished as well. However, with the return of peace in 1492 and the majority of Philip the Fair in 1494, the 'business' of the court would show signs of revival, albeit with changing patterns.

IV.

In 1494, Maximilian relinquished his authority as regent, and his son Philip the Fair established his own court with the support of the Estates-General. Born in Bruges, raised by his mother Mary and grandmother Margaret, Philip was considered a 'native' prince (unlike his father) and his court was dominated by nobles of the Burgundian Netherlands.[56] Maximilian had drafted an ordinance establishing the court for Philipp, but it was soon amended and signaled the latter's desire to leave his own stamp.[57] The revised ordinance of 1496 greatly expanded the size of the court, but with only one foreigner named in it, it also reflected the predominance of Netherlandish courtiers who had survived the previous

[56] J.-M. Cauchies, *Philippe le Beau*, 25-32.

[57] J.-M. Cauchies, "De la 'régenterie' à l'autonomie : deux ordonnances de cour et de gouvernement de Maximilien et Philippe le Beau (1495), *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire* 171 (2005): 41-88. The two ordinnances are reproduced in the appendix.

turmoil, and a return to the structure and practices of the earlier Burgundian court. The ordinance also opens a window to see the changing pattern of ties between court and commerce at the end of the fifteenth century.

In the court ordinance of 1496, we witness the return of the personal Steward of the duke (*sommelier de corps du duc*).[58] In this detailed document, the court seems to have returned to a scale and structure approaching that of Charles the Bold. Though there is no First Steward, the three Stewards receive 18 shillings a day, the highest sum for a non-noble courtier. One Steward is named Philippe de Visen, perhaps a family member of Charles de Visen, who twenty years earlier was also a Steward and Keeper of the Jewels.[59] Though the structure is somewhat different, the ducal chamber has one Keeper of the Robe with one subordinate, one Tapestry-manager (*tapissier*) with two subordinates, two tailors (*taillandiers*), and two robe-makers (*fourreurs de robes*), receiving daily wages from 3 to 12 shillings. The ordinance also names The Keeper of the Jewels, Woulter van Huesdan, who with two aides also received the high sum of 18 shillings.[60] The ordinance, unsurprisingly, does not describe the functions or responsibilities of the various court officers, and it is difficult to reconstruct the work of these officials without extensive records of court expenditure. Still, the relatively well documented case of the Woulter van Huesdan, Keeper of the Jewels, provides an illuminating example.

[58] Edited by Baron de Reffenberg, "État de l'hôtel de Philippe-le-Bel, duc de Bourgogne, en l'an 1496, à Bruxelles" *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire*, 11 (1846): 678-718.

[59] Reffenberg, "État de l'hôtel," 699.

[60] Reffenberg, "État de l'hôtel," 703.

Woulter van Huesden first appears as a jewelry merchant (*marchand joillier*) in Bruges in 1457.[61] In the treasurer's accounts of 1474, Huesden reappears as the recipient of a substantial gift of 264 pounds.[62] These records shows that he had connections to the Burgundian court going back to the reign of Charles the Bold. He then reappears as the Keeper of the Jewels in the ordinance of 1477.[63] In this relatively bare-bones ordinance establishing the court of the newly arrived Maximilian, it is noteworthy that a Keeper of the Jewels was appointed and recorded. Charles de Visen had probably not yet returned to the Netherlands, but the position of the Keeper of the Jewels was too crucial to leave vacated. Huesden's appointment in an ordinance drawn up primarily by Louis, lord of Gruunthuse and Adolf, lord of Ravenstein indicates that he was most likely under their patronage.[64] In the ordinance, Huesdan is named as receiving 18 shillings per day, reaffirming the importance of the Keeper of the Jewels. Yet the lack of distinction between the major and lesser jewels (which existed in the time of Charles the Bold) and the mention of only one assistant to help Huesden also testifies to the overall diminished size of the ducal treasures that were to be managed by the Keeper.

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[61] AD Nord, B. 3661, fol. 40v, 47r, 48v, 63v, 81v. He is paid for several intricate ornaments, such as a golden collar studded with jewels, that are all purchased by Charles, then count of Charolais, and used as gifts for other courtiers. Yet, after these transactions in 1457, he does not seem to appear in the ducal accounts, and only appears once in the accounts of the *argentier*.

[62] *Comptes* IV, nr. VII-231. Because this record is only *en brief*, there is no detail regarding why he was receiving the substantial gift. Considering his later career as the Keeper of the Jewels, it may have been in return for financial services, such as the transfer of funds between the various realms.

[63] Gachard, *Analectes*, 20.

[64] It seems likely that he was closer to Louis, lord of Gruunthuse. His family name may point to his origins in the County of Holland (The castle of Heusden, in the vicinity of 's-Hertogenbosch), while he was by then a resident of Bruges. Louis was a native of Bruges and serving as the Stadsholder of Holland and Zeelend in the 1470s.

The newly appointed Keeper of the Jewels, Woulter Van Huesden, performed a role that was at once similar to yet different from that of his predecessor. As Keeper of the Jewels, Huesden would have been responsible for the maintenance and procurement of ducal treasures, and in this capacity, he may have chosen his own associate goldsmiths as suppliers to the court. This may be the reason why Gerart Loyet was no longer named a "valet de chamber" after 1477, even as no one seems to have replaced him as the ducal goldsmith. Still, Huesden would have been in constant contact with Loyet. In 1487, Huesden was appointed as the newly created "Supreme Governor of all the Mints (*opperste gouverneur van alle munten van herwairts*)" in addition to his office as the Keeper of the Jewels.[65] This appointment shows that the Keeper was responsible for the ducal mints as well as his jewels, and underscores the crucial role that the Keeper of the Jewels played in the monetary policies of the Burgundian Netherlands. In this position, Huesden was once again Loyet's superior, for the latter had been retained as the "Master of the Mint" in Bruges and then had been elevated to "General Master of all the Mints" in 1484.[66] The elevation of Loyet also confirms that this goldsmith continued to be treasured for his administrative skills, even when his artistic skills were no longer required.

[65] Peter Spufford, "The general officers of the Burgundian mints in the Netherlands in the fifteenth century," *Jaarboek voor munt- en penningkunde* 66/67 (1978/79), 8-9.

[66] Velden, *The Donor's Image*, 25-26. In this capacity, Loyet was also asked to issue instructions for the management of the mint in Brabant. Unfortunately, according to Velden (Ibid., 326) the originally document could not be located, and only a brief except published in P.O. van der Chijs, *De munten der voormalige hertogdommen Brabant en Limburg van de vroegste tijden tot aan de pacificatie van Gent* (Ha rleem, 1851), 322-25 remains. Still, this is another measure of the administrative capabilities of Loyet.

This monetary role of the Keeper of the Jewels and the mint master was especially important for Maximilian. Although Maximilian gradually saddled the Burgundian Netherlands with a tax burden that was even heavier than that of Charles the Bold, he was continuously short of money.[67] Having lost the support of the Estates-General, Maximilian was dependent on his own revenue in waging continuous warfare with France, reconquering the Duchy of Luxembourg and Guelders, and suppressing the rebel cities. To pay his German mercenaries who conducted these campaigns, Maximilian began to resort to debasing coins in the Burgundian mints, hence the vital importance of mobilizing the Keeper of the Jewels and the mint masters. Just as Maximilian had sought to centralize ducal finances by creating the office of a superintendent of finance, he concentrated more monetary power in his personal treasurer, the Keeper of the Jewels.[68] Whereas under Charles the Bold, Loyet had been charged with ensuring debased coins from the Rhinelands were not circulating in the Burgundian realm, under Maximilian, he was ironically using the same skills to efficiently debase coins to fill the ducal coffers. Eventually, Maximilian succeeded in commanding differences (*seigniorages*) as high as twenty-four *groats* per mark – six to eight times what was levied during the reign of Charles the Bold – and skimming off profits of about a hundred pounds *tournois* a year,

[67] Hamers, *For the Common Good*, 26-59.

[68] Often historians consider the centralizing polices of Maximilian a logical extension of those of Charles the Bold, however, at least in matters of commerce and finance, we can see the court of Charles exhibited more acumen and savy in both the operations of the court and mint policies, whereas Maximilian in his unquenchable thirst for more revenue was either negligent or ignorant of them.

almost one fifth of his income in the 1480s.[69] Even the diminished and embattled court of the Maximilian could still harness the expertise and skills of courtiers and artisans such as Huesden and Loyet to further its own financial priorities.

With the return of peace in 1492, and the constitution of the court of Philip the Fair in 1494, the Burgundian court would refrain from debasing coins and start to reengage merchants and artisans. Though the reconstitution of the court by Philip resembled the organization of the court of Charles the Bold, the differences in its scale and personnel, as well as the changing contours of commerce in the Low Countries brought about new patterns in 'business' of the court. In the case of court merchants, while the designation "merchant following the court" was not resurrected, the geographic location of the merchants supplying the court gradually oriented towards the Brussels - Mechelen (Malines) - Antwerp axis. In the 1480s, with much of the Burgundian realm in turmoil, the ducal court was largely confined to loyal cities, such as Antwerp and Mechelen.[70] The

[69] Peter Spufford, *Monetary Problems and Policies in the Burgundian Netherlands 1433-1496* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 130-37. Spufford argues that Charles the Bold, Philip the Good and their councilors subscribed to a view of monetary policy that considered coinage as a princely duty and obligation, upon which the good of thepeople rested, whereas Maximilian and his advisors subscribed to the older view which considered coinage as a princely right and source of revenue, regardless of the disastrous effect on the economy.

[70] Ghent was in almost continuous revolt against Archduke Maximilan from 1477 onwards. After 1482, much of the Flemish country was also under the authority of the independent regency council led by Ghent. Bruges was initially considered loyal to Maximilian, but because it shouldered much of the heavy financial burden inflicted by the war with France, Bruges also turned against the archduke after the death of Mary of Burgundy in 1482. Maximilian was famously taken captive in Bruges in 1488, during which many of his loyalist in the city were tried and executed. Afterwards Maximilan ordered foreign merchants to relocate to loyal Antwerp, which was one factor that hastened the decline of Bruges and the rise of Antwerp in the following century. For the contrasting trajectories of the two cities, see Wilfred Brulez, "Bruges and Antwerp in the 15th and 16th Centuries: An Antithesis?" *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae,* 6 (1973): 1-26. Brussels was initially a loyal city, but joined the rebels in 1488.

"Duchesse Mère" Margaret also began to reside more and more in Mechelen, which was also one of her dowager lands.[71] By the 1490s, Mechelen had become the de facto capital of the Burgundian Netherlands, and the north-south corridor cutting through the Duchy of Brabant became the heart of ducal power in the Low Countries.

Not surprisingly, merchants settled in the above three cities appear as major suppliers. For instance, in the year 1492, a certain Nicolas Spingle, "merchant Genovese residing in Antwerp" and another unnamed "tapestry merchant residing in Mechelen" received large sums for supplying textiles to the archduke.[72] In the accounts of 1495, Aert Clout, "merchant of silk draperies residing in Mechelen," received the largest number and sum of transactions as well as a monetary gift for his services.[73] This Clout is also identified elsewhere as a Genovese merchant.[74] Meanwhile, Jean Van Assche, "merchant of silk draperies in Brussels," received smaller transactions, while a Pierre Schye, "merchant of Antwerp," also appears as a supplier.[75] Thus, the court no longer had designated "merchants following the court" located in major commercial nodes but rather seems to have preferred foreign merchants who catered to the needs of the court and its

[71] Win Blockmans, "Margaret of York. The Subtle Influence of a Duchess." *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. Dagmar Eichberger (Leuven, 2005), 43-48; Weightman, *Margaret*, 122-26.

[72] AD Nord, B. 2144, f.187, 194.

[73] Excerpted in Gachard, "Compte de Simon Longin, 1493," *Rapport à Monsieur le Ministre de l'intérieur sur les documents concernant l'histoire de la Belgique* (Brussels, 1841), 278-293. Ibid., 288-89.

[74] AD Nord, B. 2145, "*Quittance de Nicolas Spingli, marchand de Gênes*."

[75] Gachard, "Compte," 291.

courtiers and were mainly stationed in the capital Mechelen or the loyal and vibrant port city of Antwerp.

The court of Philip the Fair also started to appoint new artisans as "valets of the chamber." In the account of 1494, a Jacques van Lathem appears as "valet of the chamber and painter" receiving 200 pounds for "various works of the said master … for the following festival of the noble order of the Golden Fleece."[76] Like the earlier orders that Pierre Coustain received, it was a major court occasion that necessitated a designated artisan. Still, other private painters also seem to receive various orders. As we already witnessed in the ordinances, tailors, stocking-makers and other fabric producers were named valets and tied to the court.[77] Though it is not possible to thoroughly reconstruct the manner in which the court of Philip the Fair sought to manage its relationship various merchants and artisans, these examples reveal that the court sought to reengage and harness the changed commercial world.

V.

The death of Margaret of York in 1503 serves as a coda to our study of the Burgundian court as a commercial enterprise. As dowager duchess, Margaret not only provided continuity and stability during the dynastic transition, she also exemplified the court's

[76] AD Nord, B 2148, f.180.

[77] However, as far as I have found, there seems to be no mention of an goldsmith being appointed "varlet de chambre" during this period, even though several private goldsmiths appear in the role of supplying the court.

engagement in the commerce. Margaret strove to ensure her dowager territories received trading priviledges from England and special concessions from Maximillian, and many of her officials later served in the court of Philip the Fair.[78] She was instrumental in the short reign of Philip, which begins what been called the "Second Flowering" of the Burgundian Netherlands.[79]

At the turn of the sixteenth century, the return of internal peace and prosperity, the renewed international prominence through the marriage alliance with the crown of Castile, and the conscious kindling of the Burgundian heritage by the Habsburg heirs, all point to a revival of court life in the greater Low Countries. [80] Like the golden age of Burgundy that came before it, we could also say that this "Second Flowering" was also made possible by rebuilding the 'business' of the court that had realized the original splendor. Maximilian would mobilize the expertise of his Keeper of Jewels and Master of the Mints to implement his monetary policy, while Philip the Fair would organize his court along the Burgundian model, engage select merchants in major loyal cities and designate artisans as valets.

In hindsight, the Burgundian-Habsburg court may not have regained its former glory, and the court of Philip the Fair may seem mired in 'medieval' taste. But as the surviving records hint, that medieval framework also allowed the court to maintain its

[78] Weightman, *Margaret of York*, 189-94.

[79] Prevenier and Blockmans, *The Promised Lands*, 206.

[80] B. Bousmanne, H. Wijsman, and S. Thieffry, *Philippe le Beau (1478-1506). Les trésors du dernier duc de Bourgogne*, Exhibition catalogue (Brussels, 2006).

engagement with the market and to rebuild its ‘business.’ The Burgundian-Habsburg court was a worthy, if partial, successor, that demonstrates the resilience of the court’s operations in face of a changing world.

Conclusion

Reflections on the European 'Cockpit' of Court and Commerce

> "For the Netherlands have been for many years, as one may say, the very Cockpit of Christendome, the Schoole of Armes, and Rendezvous of all adventurous Spirits, and Cadets"[1]

I.

The present examination of the Burgundian court during the second half of the fifteenth century has argued that the princely court itself, despite the nominally feudal nature of its structure and its chivalric ideals of its culture, was also a commercial organization that was engaged in production, procurement and transaction with and through the urban market it ruled. The court of the Burgundian dukes was not only an arena of power relations manifest in cultural presentations but also an enterprise of commercial practice and values channeled through court performances. The power of commerce was mobilized to perform court life: to realize the imaginary chivalric ideals and maintain the antiquated medieval political structure, the court of Charles the Bold had to also become as much of a 'business'

[1] James Howell, *Instructions for forreine travell* (London, 1642), 162. The phrase itself seems to have gained circulation only with the publication of Léon van der Essen, *A Short History of Belgium* (Chicago, 1920). Howell wrote from the vantage point of the ongoing Dutch Revolt in the seventeenth century, in which Flanders and Brabant were the main battlegrounds in which new methods of war were being experimented, while Van der Essen's use of this phrase resonated with twentieth century readers who witnessed the devastation of Belgium during the First World War.

operation as any other medieval entity, such as the urban governments of the greater Low Countries or the great merchant houses such as the Hanse. The princely court employed the same kind of people of urban background, engaged in the same kind of rules of trade, required the same kind of market skills, and assigned similar value to the goods and services it sought and even produced. In the Burgundian Netherlands, court and commerce were not only interdependent, but they were, in fact, enmeshed in each other.

This notion flies in the face of our understanding of court and commerce in the late medieval and early modern era. Historians emphasize how it was exactly the growing interdependence and intermingling of court and commerce that necessitated the stronger demarcation between court and commerce in this era. The revival of chivalry, the rise of conspicuous consumption and sumptuary laws, the dawn of absolutism, each have at times been explained in terms of confronting the threat and rise of commerce and market culture. In turn, studies of other princely courts of the era have often focused on the political and cultural manifestations of these issues. To counter this line of argument, the sole case of the Burgundian court would not be sufficient. My broader argument – that the imbrication of court and commerce at the threshold of the modern era points to an understanding that the state and market were partners in each other's creation – calls for systematic comparative work with other princely courts of its day and their later metamorphosis. Such a project is currently beyond the purview of this work and the capacity of this author, and the lack of secondary literature on the operational aspects of princely courts makes it difficult to pursue. However, it is possible to probe this issue through a more general question regarding nobility and commerce: derogation (*dérogeance*).

II.

Derogation provides a challenging yet illuminating angle from which to understand the imbricated nature of court and commerce during this period. Derogation was the suspension of privileges for a noble who engaged in activities not in keeping with his noble status, such as the direct farming of land, the practice of handicraft, or engaging in trade. Naturally, it was the last case that by far became the most contentious, for a certain amount of wealth was a pre-requisite to "live nobly (*vivre noblement*)," yet the pursuit of "profit" would be anathema to a noble who was to seek "honor" in service of the prince and common good. Thus, the concept of derogation has often been cited as a prime example of how the world of the court and the world of commerce were incompatible.[2]

This idea that nobility by definition could not go hand-in-hand with commerce has been often presented as universal and immemorial, and especially entrenched in the French kingdom.[3] There, it was enforced by law, prosecuted by royal agents, and was finally dislodged only after a vigorous debate in the late eighteenth century.[4] The Valois dukes of

[2] For instance, Liah Greenfeld, *The Spirit of Capitalism: Nationalism and Economic Growth* (Harvard, 2001), 134-35.

[3] Davis Bitton, *The French Nobility in Crisis, 1560-1640* (Stanford, 1969), 64-65 quotes Herodotus in support of *dérogeance* as notion that "probably existed in all societies with hereditary aristocracies." Philippe Contamine, "The European Nobility," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 7, *1415-1500* (Cambridge, 1998), 101.

[4] The change was ignited by the publication of *La noblesse commerçantev*(1756) by Coyer and the reply by d'Arcq. John Shovlin, *The Political Economy of Virtue Luxury, Patriotism, and the Origins of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, 2006), 58-65; Henry C. Clark, *Compass of Society: Commerce and Absolutism in Old-regime France* (Lanham, 2007).

Burgundy were a branch of the French royal house, and Burgundian court culture is considered part of a shared Francophone culture of the period. Thus, historians have often considered the institution of derogation a barrier that made it difficult for urban elites of the Burgundian Netherlands to join the ranks of the nobility.[5] How do we square such sentiments with the operations of the Burgundian court and the outlook of its courtiers examined above?

First, it is important to note that the laws of derogation were only codified in the sixteenth century, even if the notion is considered to have existed from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. The famous reprimand, "it is not the role of a noble to be a tavern-keeper," appears already in 1393 and is repeated against nobles who seek to engage in the direct selling of wine.[6] But it was only in the year 1560 that the law of derogation was codified. That year, the Estates-General gathered at Orléans decreed that "all nobles (*gentilshommes*) … who engaged in commerce (*merchandise*) … be deprived of their privileges of nobility (*noblesse*) and imposed the taille."[7] Historians have reasoned that derogation only became law when the old nobility (*noblesse de épée*) felt threatened by the

[5] David Nicholas, *Town and Countryside: Social, Economic and Political Tensions in Fourteenth-century Flanders* (Bruges, 1971); Jan Dumolyn and Filip van Tricht, "Adel en nobiliteringsprocessen in het laatmiddeleeuwse Vlaanderen. Een status quaestionis," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen voor de Geschiedenis van de Nederlanden* 115 (2000): 197-222.

[6] Philippe Contamine, *La noblesse au royaume de France de Philippe le Bel à Louis XII* (Paris, 1997), 208: "Ce n'est pas office de noble que d'être tavernier." Gaston Zeller, "Une notion de caractère historico-social: la dérogeance," *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 22 (1957), 41, n. 3 cites the same phrase from an ordinance of Charles VII in 1435. Étienne Dravasa, "Vivre noblement:" Recheches sur la dérogeance de noblesse du XIVe au XVIe siècle," *Revue juridique et économique du Sud-Ouest* 16 (1965): 135-93; 17 (1966): 23-129 details the surviving cases of such nobles being brought to court for engaging in derogatory activities by region and jurisdiction beginning from the late fourteenth century, though the majority of cases happened in the sixteenth century.

[7] Zeller, "Une notion," 43.

rise of the merchant class into the ranks of the new nobility (*noblesse de robe*).[8] According to this understanding, the sixteenth century "crisis of the nobility" was the background to the reactionary legislation of derogation; the nascent absolutist state supported the nobility in their struggle to retain their separate status and limited their ranks.[9]

Second, historians have noted that even as the French crown sought to restrict the ranks of nobility, it also provided exemptions regarding commercial activities that would not affect one's noble status. Because the definitions of what made one a noble were not set in stone, what constituted 'living ignobly' was also not clear. So, from the dawn of the notion of derogation in the late medieval era, we also see statements specifying or exempting certain commercial activities from the specter of derogation. For instance, overseas trade by shipping or large scale wholesale commerce was not considered demeaning, even in the fifteenth century. A mere six years after the aforementioned action of the Estates-General of Orléans, Charles IX would issue letters allowing the nobles of Marseilles to engage in maritime trade without fear of losing noble status.[10] In 1614, the nobles of Normandy also made a request for the same exemptions, which were duly

[8] Henri Lévy-Bruhl, "La noblesse de France et le commerce a la fin de l'ancien régime," *Revue d'histoire moderne* 8 (1933): 210. Also echoed in Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London, 1974), 127, n.16.

[9] Bitton, *The French Nobility*; Dravasa, "Vivre noblement," 99-106; Samuel Clark, *State and Status: The Rise of the State and Aristocratic Power in Western Europe* (Montreal, 1995), 222-27. However, these arguments condense into the late sixteenth century a story that is witnessed from the commercial revolution of the High Middle Ages onwards: both the rise of the urban mercantile class and the reaction of the nobility. Robert Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350* (Cambridge, 1976).

[10] Zeller, "Une notion," 45.

granted. Richelieu would affirm these exemptions to derogation in the ordinance of 1629.[11] Colbert would go further and affirm in the Edict of 1669 that nobles would not lose their status by engaging in trade and industry, other than practicing retail, encouraging them to invest in the colonial trade or the luxury industries.

These seemingly contradictory trends, the gradual articulation and strengthening of derogation laws and the cyclical exemptions and even encouragement of participation in commerce in that same period, have led one historian to speak about the "long decadence" of the idea of derogation that was detrimental to the economic development of France in the early modern period.[12] Another claims that the French state was "not of one mind," and oscillated between supporting the traditional nobility and strengthening the new, depending also on region.[13]

However, as Gayle Brunelle convincingly shows for the cases brought to Court of Taxes (*Cour des Aides*) in Rouen between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the crux of the matter was taxation.[14] It was not so much that the nobles belatedly started to dabble in commerce to make up for declining revenue from demesne lands during the sixteenth century, or that the nobles wanted to clamp down on recently ennobled merchants who were still engaged in trade. Rather, many noble families in Rouen had been engaged in trade since the early fifteenth century, and it was the towns and the merchants that started

[11] Zeller, "Une notion," 57-8.

[12] Gaston Zeller, "Procès à reviser? Louis XI, la Noblesse et la Marchandise," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 1 (1946): 331–341.

[13] Clark, *State and Status,* 223.

[14] Gayle K. Brunelle, "Narrowing Horizons: Commerce and Derogation in Normandy," *Society and Institutions in Early Modern France,* ed. Mack P. Holt (Athens, 1991), 63-79.

bringing the cases to the court.[15] When the royal tax (*taille*) was established as a universal tax in the late fifteenth century, nobles were exempted, which provided them with an unfair advantage, so the towns and merchants sought to have their tax-exempt status repealed or to bar them from the trade.[16] At first, the courts were reluctant to derogate a noble for commercial activities, and nobles rarely sought additional guarantees to affirm their noble status, but as the crown sought to extract maximum revenue over the sixteenth and seventeenth century, it would initiate prosecution of nobles engaged in commerce and compel them to purchase patent letters affirming their noble status from the crown, in effect, recouping the loss of revenue from direct taxation by charging nobles an indirect way.[17]

These observations bring into relief the nature of court and commerce in the Burgundian Netherlands of the late fifteenth century. First, as we saw in the previous chapter, the distinction between noble-worthy maritime and wholesale trade and ignoble retail and tavern-keeping retail was already well established in the honor system of the *The Hundred New Tales*: Great merchants were considered as honorable as grand lords, while the activities of petty peddlers were considered as demeaning as manual labor. It was a division that we also witnessed in the organization of court operations, with the distinction

[15] Hugo Soly and Catharina Lis, *Worthy Efforts: Attitudes to Work and Workers in Pre-industrial Europe* (Leiden, 2012), 249-51, makes a similar argument, in particular for the Spanish Netherlands in the sixteenth century.

[16] Brunelle, "Narrowing Horizons," 70.

[17] Brunelle, "Narrowing Horizons," 73-4. Ibid., 76, goes on to argues that the French monarchs who strictly enforced derogation laws were in fact restricting the financial resources of the nobles and thus helping the Third Estate, while the monarchs who finally abolished such laws they were forsaking the defense of the Third Estate and favoring the interests of the nobility. She considers the end of derogeance laws as a sign of a resurgent nobility.

between "merchants following the court" who were court agents and the "peddlers following the court" who were not. Therefore, at the Burgundian court, engaging in wholesale and long distance commerce itself was not a derogatory activity, and none other than a knight of the Golden Fleece, Simon de Lalaing, would engage in the wine trade, buying wine from Alsace and shipping it to Sluis for sale.[18] It is no wonder that there are no known cases of derogation brought before a court in the Burgundian Netherlands during the fifteenth century.

Furthermore, the issue of derogation did not arise in the Burgundian realm because a direct tax had not yet been implemented. Noble engagement in trade only became a problem when it was combined with the tax-exempt status of the nobility, providing them with an advantage over taxed townsmen. In the Burgundian Netherlands, there was no direct tax that the nobility were exempt from, and thus the nobility did not enjoy an unfair advantage in trade. This meant that there was little reason for the merchants to clamor for a derogation law against the nobility. Rather, as we saw with the ducal merchant Jehan de Langle and the ducal painter Pierre Coustain, the Burgundian court would assiduously use its clout to provide its agents a commercial advantage, by exempting them from urban tax and regulations. Cities in turn would seek to blunt this advantage, by restricting their clients to courtiers and servants of the ducal household. Once again, the participation of

[18] Frederik Buylaert, *Eeuwen van ambitie: de adel in laatmiddeleeuws Vlaanderen* (Brussel, 2010), 108. Lalaing owned no fief in Alsace, so this wine was not produced from his own domains. This fascinating case was discovered by Buylaert from the privately held diary of Jan van Dadizele, who accompanied him on the journey. Ibid, 107-120, also cites other instances of Flemish nobles, such as Pierre Bladin, *maître de hôtel du duc*, and Louis of Bruges, Lord of Gruuthuse and *chevalier*, *conseilleur* and *chamberlain* at the Burgundian court, who derived part of their income from commercial activities.

the officers of the court and its noble courtiers in commerce per se was not a cause of derogation or contention, but the tax exemption privileges bestowed by the court that mattered.

Finally, this prods us to consider this Burgundian moment in the late fifteenth century as distinct from the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, rather than as the first stage in a 'long decadence' of the derogation, the continuous 'crisis' of the nobility, and the repeated 'rise' of the mercantile class. Coming as it did at the end of a long-term commercial expansion that began in the eleventh century and accelerated by the favorable conditions following the subsiding of the Black Death in the mid fourteenth century, the fifteenth century can be considered as moment in which court and commerce were relatively comfortably enmeshed. The Burgundian court evidences no problems running a commercial operation with ducal merchants and artisans, nor do illustrious knights have qualms about engaging in wine trade, nor were courtiers, urban elites and foreign merchants adverse to mingling together in processions and in jousts.[19]

It was also an outlook that was shared by Burgundian allies and enemies, with the Quattrocento Italian city-states a constant reminder of the intermixing of court and commerce, and with Louis XI seeking to emulate both the Italians and Burgundians in his quest to subdue them. Chastelain reports that in 1462, he "was told that the king [Louis XI] ennobled by decree all those who wished to do business (*voudroient marchander*) in his kingdom, and accorded them the privilege of noble men, and likewise bestowed and gave

[19] The annual jousts of the White Bear in Bruges is a prime example. Andrew Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges 1300-1520* (Cambridge, 2011), 143-45.

license to all nobles to employ their merchandise (*marchandise*), without prejudice on their name or their status."[20] Though the exact decree has not survived, other decrees by Louis XI exhorting nobles to engage in commerce have survived, contributing to his reputation as the first "Bourgeois King (*le roi bourgeois*)."[21] Rather than an anomaly or a "precocious" visionary for his time, Louis XI encapsulated the spirit of the times, in which court culture could rather confidently and comfortably incorporate and harness commerce for itself.

At this moment of Burgundian glory in the fifteenth century, in an almost contradictory sense, the chivalric undertakings and the splendor of court life inadvertently legitimized and required the pursuit of wealth through commercial activities, as long as they were the means, not the ends. The nominally feudal nature of power relations structured around lordship and personal dominion, and the seemingly chivalric nature of a court culture performing and celebrating Arthurian romance, could also comfortably encompass commercial practices and outlooks, without viewing them as a threat or a cause for derogation. "In the capacity to live with ambiguities," the Burgundian courtiers "fit all together into a framework of agreement that was theoretically ramshackle, but –given contemporary conditions – socially persuasive and reassuring."[22] So observed the late

[20] *Chronique de Georges Chastellain*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, vol. 4 (Brussels, 1864), 271-2: "*fut dit que le roy fit annoblir par cryée tous ceux qui voudroient marchander en son royaume, et leur accorda privilège de noble homme; et pareillement octroya et donna grâce à tous nobles de user de marchandise, sans préjudice de leur nom et de leur estât.*"

[21] Zeller, "Procès à reviser?" 331–341.

[22] Maurice Keen, "Some Late Medieval Ideas about Nobility," *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages* (London, 1996), 205-6.

Maurice Keen, examining how the Burgundian notion of nobility held in balance the disparate and contradictory strands of Romanist teaching, chivalrous tradition and Humanist thought. It is an astute assessment that also rings true for the imbricated nature of court and commerce in the princely court of the Burgundian Netherlands.

III.

The greater Low Countries has often been described as the "cockpit of Christendome" for it was here that armies gathered, clashed and decided the fate of Europe. It can be said that it was also here that we also have a clear view of how the state and the market were embroiled in the same process during the late medieval and early modern era. If there is something unique about the European experience in the centuries preceding "modern," it is how much market was meshed with the state, and how much this had to be constantly reworked and reimagined to incorporate it into a the political structure of the state as well as to make it an acceptable culture. The Burgundian era of the fifteenth century did so by tweaking court structure and reimagining chivalric culture to incorporate commerce. As the issue of derogation reveals, this was a process that was akin to the English and Italian cases, and even had resonance in the French Kingdom. But the progress was not unilinear, as the Burgundian solution was one that would not hold for the sixteenth and seventeenth century, which tried to shed Europe of its medieval legacy. Thus it was mainly in the colonial projects that this relationship between the state and the market was worked out and debated – until it could no longer be ignored and Europeans uniquely, in the eighteenth

century, came to see commerce as, unambiguously, a business of the state. The 'business' of the princely court in the Burgundian Netherlands call us to reconsider the European story of commerce and court during the late medieval and early modern era.

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